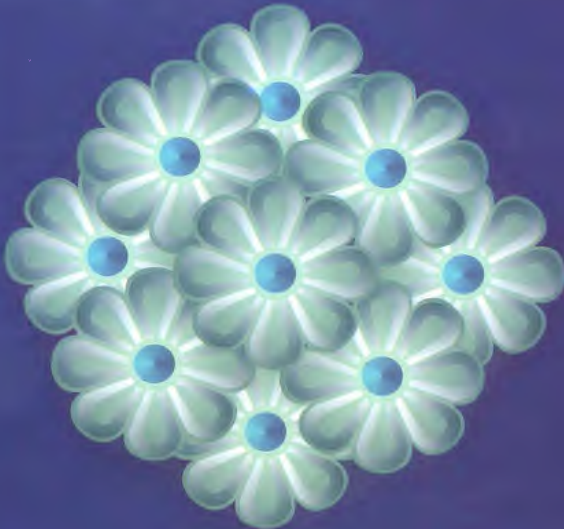


STORIES FROM THE HADITH

By : Mohammad Zakariya Iqbal

Faḍil Jamia Darul Uloom Karachi

DARUL ISHA'AT

Urdu Bazar Karachi-1 Pakistan

قصص الحديث

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نحمده ونصلّى على رسوله الكريم.

We praise Allah and invoke blessings on His noble Messenger.

It is a great blessing of Allah that a long-standing desire has been fulfilled. The *Qasas Al-Hadith* in Urdu is now followed with its English translation. I remember my respected father, Al-Haj Muhammad Razi Usmani, discussing the idea of this book with several scholars but it could not be given a practical shape until now. I found some books in Arabic very near my father's idea and showed them to Mawlana Zakariya Iqbal who took up the challenge and undertook to write the Urdu book which he accomplished. And now the English version is in your hands. I had impressed upon the Mawlana that the stories be presented particularly with a lesson-drawing angle so that the aim of the *Hadith* is emphasised.

May Allah reward him for undertaking the task and accomplishing it very well. He is a great scholar, and a *hafiz* of the Qur'an, and has specialised in the science of *Hadith*. He has many other works to his credit.

I am confident that our efforts will meet the approval of the readers. May it all also meet the approval of Allah, the Exalted.

Khalil Ashraf Usmani

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PART THREE

PART FOUR

بســـم الله الرحـــمن الرحـــيم

......how it come to be!

All praise belongs to the Lord, Majestic and Full of Glory, whose Knowledge encompasses the seen and the unseen, and Who has made the hearts of His slaves resplendent with the knowledge and sciences of the Qur'an and *Hadith*.

May blessings and peace be on that noble and distinguished being ﷺ who narrated the unseen facts through divine revelation, and who unveiled the lives and conditions of earliers Prophets and their people that we may get guidance.

It is instinctive to man from his inception to probe into the past, even that which is buried deep into earth. He has always been inquisitive about nations gone by. It is this urge that gave birth to archaeology. The efforts of the archaeologists to unearth the past are more marked in this age.

It is true that these people have learnt about the past and the ancient people, but, it is also true, that they have not been able to fathom why those people were sometimes destroyed by heavenly calamities or earthquakes and other earthly disasters or, why those people were eliminated or transformed into lower beings like swines and apes which misled scientists into believing in the theory of evolution.

The answers to these questions cannot be had through excavations, nor can geologists use their implements to have them. It is only revelation from Allah that can provide this knowledge. This revelation is a treasure which has no price tag to it but which reveals the truth and discloses the secrets. It is handed down from the One Who is All-Knowing and All-Aware and from Whom nothing on earth or in the heavens is concealed. He knows the secrets hidden in hearts and the steasthy, secret glances.

يَعْلَمُ خَآئِنَةَ الْأَعْيُنِ وَمَا تُخْفِي الصُّدُورُ

{He knows the treachery of the eyes and what the hearts

conceal.}

Every other knowledge and science is meaningless against revelation.

In every age, human minds and intellect were left spell bound on the facts revealed by revelation. The discoveries and theories that science presents in this age were revealed to the Holy Prophet ﷺ centuries ago and conveyed to people through the Qur'an and *Hadith*. In fact, science has confirmed those revelations through its research.

Science depends on divine revelation and follows it, and it is not the other way about. Some scholars try to prove the revelations of the Qur'an and *Hadith* through science but that is absurd. Modern science has arrived at conclusions that were known to Islam centuries ago.

The *Wahy* from Allah (or divine revelation) is of two kinds:

i) *Matloo*, that is, the Qur'an, and

ii) *Ghayr Matloo*, that is, the *Hadith*.

The living and the stories of the ancient people and nations is revealed to us by both these forms. The Qur'an calls these accounts, *ahsan al-qasas,* the best of narratives. It has recounted them in a very effective style so that the lesson is imparted very convincingly. The Qur'an tells us:

لَقَدْ كَانَ فِيْ قَصَصِهِمْ عِبْرَةٌ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ

{In their stories, there is certainly a lesson for men of understanding.} (Yusuf, 12:111)

The stories narrated by the Qur'an include the accounts of the Children of Isra'il, the 'Aad, the Thamud, the Madyan of Prophet Salih عليه السلام, the people of Shu'ayb, the tribe of *Al-Aykah*, (thicket), the dwellers of the cave, Zulqarnayn, Prophet Yusuf عليه السلام, the *tubba'* (Himyarites), Jaloot, and others. Some of these narratives are brief and some elaborate.

Nevertheless, the Qur'an is not a story book but it is a source of guidance and admonition, It deals with only that aspect of these accounts which provides a moral or a lesson. The Qur'an has disregarded parts of the accounts which did not serve its purpose of

[1] Ghafir, 40:19. Translation of the Qur'an is reproduced from *A Study of Al-Qur'an Al-Karim*, La'l Muhammad Chawla, throughout this book unless stated otherwise.

guidance and we find innumerable examples of this in the narratives of Sayyidina Musa عليه السلام and Sayyidina Yusuf عليه السلام.

As for the *Hadith* of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, it is an explanation, a commentary or an exegesis on the Holy Qur'an. Therefore, details of the Qur'an's narratives are found in the *Ahadith*. Besides, many such narratives which the Qur'an has by-passed find mention in the *Ahadith*. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has mentioned them for the guidance of his *Ummah*.

There are many works in Urdu on the stories narrated in the Qur'an, notable among them *Qasas Al-Qur'an* by Allamah Hifzur Rahman Siyuharwi[1]. However, there is no reliable work on stories of the *Ahadith*.

It has fallen to the farsightedness of Mr. Khalil Ashraf Usmani (proprietor of Dar-ul-Isha'at, Karachi) to pick up such subjects of interest to scholars and laymen, and fill the gap.

He had brought some books in Arabic from the holy cities of Makkah and Madinah and showed them to me, requesting me to develop the idea in those works in Urdu. The subject was very appealing and although I had an important task on hand, I undertook to work on the idea.

Several months later, I am able to present this book.

The pattern followed by me is that I have first briefly introduced every incident. Then I have presented the *Hadith* and its translation. All the reference for the *Hadith* are given in detail.

This is followed by an explanation of the *Hadith* and other relative *Ahadith* and narrations by the Companions. These are helpful in understanding the original event and original *Hadith*.

These are wound up with the lessons and guidance drawn from the events.

The Book begins with an Introduction. The *qasas* (narrative) is defined herein, and its importance as an indelible guide of human mind is stressed.

I have tried my best to make this work comprehensive and beneficial. But, man is liable to err. Perfection is the attribute of Allah alone. Hence, I do not rule out possibilities of errors and mistakes in this work. I would be obliged to scholars and learned

[1] Dar-ul-Isha'at has had them translated into English and they will be available in the market shortly.

men to guide me and point out my shortcomings so that I may correct them.

May Allah let this effort be a source of reward in the Hereafter for myself and my parents, the publisher and his family! May He guide us to serve His religion! And may He let readers derive the best from this book!

وما توفيقي إلا بالله عليه توكّلت واليه انيب.

15th Sha'ban, 1420.
MUHAMMAD ZAKARIYA IQBAL
Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Karachi.

INTRODUCTION

We propose to define *qasas* or narrative, and show its significance. We also hope to see the advantages of the stories in the Qur'an and *Ahadith*. The word *qisas* is the plural of *qisah*. The Arabs use the word for an account of the past. The Qur'an says:

كَذَالِكَ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ مِنْ اَنْبَاءِ مَا قَدْسَبَقَ ٥

{Thus do We narrate to you (O Prophet) some tidings of that which has gone before.} (Ta Ha, 20:99)

And again,

نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ اَحْسَنَ الْقَصَصِ ٥

{(O Prophet) We narrate to you the best of narratives.} (Yusuf, 12:3)

The Arabs used the word *qasas* to depict true events of past eras and peoples and they often coloured their depiction with exaggerated tales. But the Qur'an narrated them faithfully without exaggeration or colouring. In fact, its aim in narrating them was solely to guide the people and instruct them.

The Arabs also use this word, *qasas*, to mean: *follow in someone's track,* and *to discern, from external appearances, temperament and character.* Thus, those whose profession it is to track down somebody follow the footprints and deduce therefrom the character and appearance of the owners of the footprints.

Thus the word *qasas* is used in the sense of a story or event because the narrator tracks down and adheres to the essence of the narration and he recounts them according to their words and meanings. Accordingly, the Qur'an, too, has used the word *qissah*, in this meaning. When it recalls Sayyidina Mu'sa عليه السلام and Sayyidina Yusha' عليه السلام:

فَارْتَدَّا عَلَىٰ آثَارِهِمَا قَصَصًا ٥

{So they returned retracing their footsteps} (Al-Kahf, 18:64)

A murderer who is guilty of slaying is put to death in *qisas* (retaliation). This word is derived from the same root–the act of the murderer, *slaying*, is pursued (followed). What he has done to others is done to him.

Story-telling is an ancient art. It is practiced from the earliest times and is alive to-date. It holds a unique position in literary arts and has been serving different ends and is recognised for eloquence in delivery and as an aid to influence the human mind. It is as old as any literary art.

A man gets peace of mind through stories and this is the chief advantage of a story. His taste for literature develops and he learns to convey his thought to other people in a convincing manner. His ideas and thinking attain higher levels. His inquisitive nature is satisfied and his knowledge increases. Anything narrated as a story is easily digested by the mind and accepted.

Apart from these advantages, a very great benefit is that one can propagate religious teachings very effectively through stories. This is why much of the Qur'an–in fact, one-third of it–is based on true stories and events, and it has termed them exemplary, admonition and reminders. For instance, it tells us:

لَقَدْ كَانَ فِيْ قَصَصِهِمْ عِبْرَةٌ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ۝

{In their stories, there is certainly a lesson for men of understanding.} (Yusuf, 12: 111)

It also tells us:

وَجَاءَكَ فِيْ هٰذِهِ الْحَقُّ وَمَوْعِظَةٌ وَّذِكْرٰى لِلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ۝

{...in these there has come to you the Truth and an exhortation, and an admonition for the Believers.} (Hud, 11: 120)

It is thus that we also find a treasure of narratives in *Ahadith*. The aim, again, is the same–to effectively call people to Islam and guidance.

Nevertheless, it is a fact that recounting tales of the past can be a productive tool in propagating religion and reforming society provided we refrain from exaggerating and falsifying.

PART ONE

Soul Inspiring Events from the Lives of Prophets

The First Story

The Amazing Story of Sayyidina Adam's عليه السّلام Denial and Forgetfulness Prologue

First Words

Today archaeologists excavate into the depths of the earth to look for the lost civilisations and to learn how our forefathers lived. It is true that they have delved into the past and achieved some success but we cannot say with certainty that their conclusions are reliable. What may be said of their results is that they are strong assumptions. Actually, they are deprived of celestial knowledge which only Divine revelation can provide.

It is Divine revelation alone that reveals to us the conditions and lives of ancient people. The straightforward but definite Divine revelation are from the All-knowing and All-Aware Being from Whom nothing on earth or in the heavens is hidden and hence the knowledge received through that revelation is authentic and reliable.

The *Hadith* that we will now see portrays the beginning of mankind. It describes the instinctive nature of the father of mankind, Sayyidina Aadam عليه السّلام and reveals his characteristics which have been inherited by his progeny. It also mentions some of the religious dogmas and heavenly modes of living which became obligatory for Aadam عليه السّلام and his children.

روى الترمذي فى سننه عَنْ أبِى هُرَيْرَةَ: قَالَ قَالَ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ صَلَّى اللّٰهُ
عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّم، (لَمَّا خَلَقَ اللّٰه آدَمَ مَسَحَ ظَهْرَهُ، فَسقَطَ مِنْ ظَهْرِهِ كُلُّ نَسَمَةٍ هُوَ
خَالِقُهَا مِنْ ذُرِيَّتِهِ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ، وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَ عَيْنَىْ كُلِّ إِنْسَانٍ مِنْهُمْ وَبِيْصاً مِنْ

نُوْرٍ، ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى آدَمَ، فَقَالَ: أَيْ ربِّ، مَنْ هٰؤُلَاءِ؟ قَالَ: هٰؤُلَاءِ ذُرِّيَّتُكَ.

فَرَأَى رَجُلاً مِنْهُمْ، فَأَعْجَبَهُ وَبِيْصُ مَا بَيْنَ عَيْنَيْهِ، فَقَالَ أَيْ رَبِّ مَنْ هٰذا؟ فَقَال: هٰذَا رَجُلٌ مِنْ آخِرِ الأُمَمِ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِكَ، يُقَالُ لَهُ: دَاوُدُ، فَقَالَ: رَبِّ، كَمْ جَعَلْتَ عُمْرَهُ؟ قَالَ: سِتِّيْنَ سَنَةً، قَالَ: أَيْ رَبِّ، زِدْهُ مِنْ عُمْرِي أَرْبَعِيْنَ سَنَةً، فَلَمَّاقُضِيَ عُمْرُ آدَمَ جَاءَهُ مَلَكُ الْمَوْتِ، فَقَالَ: أَوَلَمْ يَبْقَ مِنْ عُمْرِي أَرْبَعُوْنَ سَنَةً؟ قَالَ: أَوَلَمْ تُعْطِهَا ابْنَكَ دَاوُدَ؟ قَالَ: فَجَحَدَ آدَمُ فَجَحَدَتْ ذُرِّيَّتُهُ، وَنُسِّيَ آدَمُ فَنُسِّيَتْ ذُرِّيَّتُهُ، وَخَطِئَ آدَمُ فَخَطِئَتْ ذُرِّيَّتُهُ. (قَالَ أَبُوْعِيسٰى: هٰذَا حَدِيْثٌ حَسَنٌ صَحِيْحٌ، وَقَدْ رُوِيَ مِنْ غَيْرِ وَجْهٍ عَنْ أَبِيْ هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ).

وَروى الترمذي أَيْضاً عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ ﷺ (لَمَّا خَلَقَ اللّٰه آدَمَ، وَنَفَخَ فِيْهِ الرُّوْحَ عَطَسَ، فَقَالَ: اَلْحَمْدُلِلّٰهِ فَحَمِدَ اللّٰه بِإِذْنِهِ، فَقَالَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ: يَرْحَمُكَ اللّٰه يَآ آدَمُ، اذْهَبْ إِلَى أُولٰئِكَ الْمَلَآئِكَةِ، إِلَى مَلأٍ مِنْهُمْ جُلُوْسٍ فَقُلْ: السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ، قَالُوْا: وَعَلَيْكَ السَّلامُ وَرَحْمَةُ اللّٰه، ثُمَّ رَجَعَ إِلَى رَبِّهِ، فَقَالَ: إِنَّ هٰذِهٖ تَحِيَّتُكَ وَتَحِيَّةُ بَنِيْكَ بَيْنَهُمْ.

Translation

[Imam Tirmizi has transmitted in his *Sunan* from Sayyidina Abu Hurayrah رضی الله عنه. He said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: When Allah created Aadam He wiped his back and every soul of his offspring He was to create up to the Day of Resurrection fell from his back. He put on the forehead of everyone of them a flash of light, then presented them to Aadam who asked, "My Lord, who are they? "Allah said, "They are your offspring."

He saw one of them and was charmed by the flash on his forehead, hence he asked, "My Lord! Who is this?" Allah told him that he was a man from his children of the final group of people who would be called Dawood. Aadam asked, "My Lord! What age have You assigned to him?" Allah said, "Sixty years." Aadam requested, "My Lord! Increase his age and give him

forty years of my life."

When Aadam's period of life came to an end, the angel of death came to him. He protested, "Are there not forty years of my life remaining?" The angel reminded him, "Did you not give them to your son, Dawood?" Aadam denied it (with the result that) all his children denied. And, Aadam forgot (with the result that) all his children developed (the malady of) forgetfulness. And Aadam slipped and his children faultered.] (Imam Tirmizi called this *Hadith hasan sahih*.)

[Tirmizi has again transmitted a *Hadith* narrated by Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه. He said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: When Allah created Aadam and breathed the spirit into him he sneezed and said, الحمد لله "Praise be to Allah!" So he praised Allah by His leave and his Lord said to him, "Allah have mercy on you, O Aadam. Go to those angels–the company of them who are seated–and say *As-salamu alaykum* 'Peace be upon you.' (So, he did the same thing and) the angels replied, *wa alaykas salam wa rahmat Allahi wa barakatuhu.* "And, peace be on you and the mercy of Allah and His favours." He then returned to his Lord, and He said, "This is your salutation and the greeting of your offspring among them."]

فَقَالَ اللّٰهُ لَهُ وَيَدَاهُ مَقْبُوْضَتَانِ: اخْتَرْ أَيَّهُمَا شِئْتَ، قَالَ: اخْتَرْتُ يَمِيْنَ رَبِّي، وَكِلْتَا يَدَيْ رَبِّيْ يَمِيْنٌ مُّبَارَكَةٌ، ثُمَّ بَسَطَهَا، فَإِذَا فِيْهَا آدَمُ وَذُرِّيَّتُهُ، فَقَالَ: أَيْ رَبِّ مَا هٰؤُلَاءِ؟ فَقَالَ: هٰؤُلَاءِ ذُرِّيَّتُكَ، فَإِذَا كُلُّ إِنْسَانٍ مَّكْتُوْبٌ عُمْرُهُ بَيْنَ عَيْنِهِ، فَإِذَا فِيْهِمْ رَجُلٌ أَضْوَؤُهُمْ، أَوْ مِنْ أَضْوَئِهِم، قَالَ يَا رَبِّ، مَنْ هٰذَا؟ قَالَ هٰذَا ابْنُكَ دَاوُدُ، قَدْ كَتَبْتُ لَهُ عُمْرَ أَرْبَعِيْنَ سَنَةً. قَالَ يَا رَبِّ، زِدْهُ فِيْ عُمْرِهِ، قَالَ: ذَاكَ الَّذِيْ كَتَبْتُ لَهُ، قَالَ: أَيْ رَبِّ، فَإِنِّيْ قَدْ جَعَلْتُ لَهُ مِنْ عُمْرِيْ سِتِّيْنَ سَنَةً، قَالَ: أَنْتَ وَذَاكَ.

قَالَ: ثُمَّ أُسْكِنَ الْجَنَّةَ مَا شَاءَ اللّٰهُ، ثُمَّ أُهْبِطَ مِنْهَا، فَكَانَ آدَمُ يَعُدُّ لِنَفْسِهِ. قَالَ: فَأَتَاهُ مَلَكُ الْمَوْتِ، فَقَالَ لَهُ آدَمُ قَدْعَجَّلْتَ، قَدْ كُتِبَ لِي أَلْفُ سَنَةٍ،

قَالَ: بَلٰى، وَلٰكِنَّكَ جَعَلْتَ لا بْنِكِ دَاوُدَ سِتِّيْنَ سَنَةً، فَجَحَدَ فَجَحَدَتْ ذُرِّيَّتُهُ، وَنَسِيَ فَنَسِيَتْ ذُرِّيَّتُهُ، قَالَ: فَمِنْ يَّوْمِئِذٍ أُمِرَ بِالْكِتَابِ وَالشُّهُوْدِ.(قَالَ التِرمذِي: هٰذَا حَدِيْثٌ حَسَنٌ غَرِيْبٌ مِنْ هٰذَا الْوَجْهِ، وَقَدْ رُوِىَ مِنْ غَيْرِ وَجْهٍ عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَة عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ، مِنْ رِوَايَةِ زَيْدِ ابْنِ أَسْلَمَ، عَنْ أَبِىْ صَالِحٍ، عَنْ أَبِيْ هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ).

Translation

[Then with His hands closed, Allah said to him, "Choose which of them you wish." He said, "I choose my Lords right hand, and both of my Lord's hands are right and blessed." Then He opened it and it contained Aadam and his descendants. He asked, "My Lord, what are these?" He said, "These are your descendants." (He saw that) every man's age was written on his forehead, and there was one of them the brightest of them all. He asked, "My Lord, who is this?" Allah said, "He is your son, Dawood, and I have recorded his age as forty-years." He said, "My Lord, increase his life." But Allah said, "That is what I have recorded for him." Then, Aadam said, "I give him sixty years of my life." Allah said, "That is your wish."

(The Prophet ﷺ continued:) He then lived in Paradise as long as Allah wished, then he was sent down from it. Now, (on coming down to earth,) Aadam was reckoning for himself (his period of life.) Then, the angel of death came to him and Aadam said to him, "You have come before your time. A thousand years have been recorded for me." He said, "Certainly, but you gave sixty years (of that) to your son Dawood." But, Aadam denied, and his descendants denied; and he forgot, and his descendants forgot. From that day, it was commanded to write down and to have witnesses (so that no one may deny later on.)] (Tirmizi has termed the *Hadith* as *hasan gharib*. Tirmizi has transmitted it in *Kitab Tafseer*, chapter on *surah Al-A'raf*, 4/267 and *surah Al-Falaq* and *An-Nas* 5/454.)

Explanation

Allah created Sayyidina Aadam عليه السلام in a perfect form. It is not

as some people believe that man has gradually evolved into his present form after passing through different forms. These people wrongly hold that man was not created in the form he is in now. Darwin and some other western thinkers propose that man was an ape and through evolution he slowly assumed his current shape. This theory is unIslamic and false and it is contrary to all celestial teachings.

Allah created man in his perfect form directly. From the first day, he was intelligent, able to speak and feel and understand, and to distinguish between right and wrong, true and false, piety and evil. He could fathom everything that was spoken and was able to reply to enquiries from the very first day.

When Allah created Sayyidina Aadam عليه السلام and breathed into him the spirit, he got a sneeze and he thanked Allah for that. When he did say so, Allah said to him, "O Aadam! May Allah show mercy to you." (He did not tell him, "I will be merciful to you," but He used those words to impart teaching so that they would serve as words of response to the gratitude expressed by every sneezer in future.) He then instructed Sayyidina Aadam عليه السلام to go to the group of angels sitting there. He went to them and saluted them and they responded to his greetings with a better form of salutation. Thus, Sayyidina Aadam عليه السلام moved about, heard and spoke, and he sneezed as a human would. He conversed intelligently and understood what was spoken.

It is worth observing in this *Hadith* how Allah was accommodating with His Slave Aadam. When he sneezed and said الحمد لله *"Al-Hamdulillah"*, Allah said, "O Aadam! May Allah be merciful to you!" Once Allah shows mercy to anyone then he is assured of safety, honour and favour. Indeed, Allah accepts the repentance of His sinful slaves when they turn to Him and obey Him. May He forgive us and strengthen our faith and keep away from us our foe, the satan! *Aameen!*

Allah made it obligatory for Aadam عليه السلام and his descendants in Paradise that when they sneeze they should say *al-hamdulillah* (praise be to Allah!) and when a sneezer says that the listener must say *yarhamak Allah* (May Allah have mercy on you). He also determined *salam* (peace) as their mutual salutation, and their

children's too.

The *Hadith* also quotes the Messenger of Allah ﷺ as saying that Allah stroked the back of Aadam عليه السلام (and this was as behoved Him), and all children that are to be born till the Last Day fell from it. Allah grasped all of them in His right fist although both His hands are right. When He opened the fist, Aadam and all his descendants were there.

Aadam عليه السلام observed light between the eyes of everyone who was to be created after him and the period of their life was recorded on their foreheads. He found one of them with a very bright light and he asked about him and was told that he was one of his children from the last of the people to be created. His name was Dawood (عليه السلام), and he would live for sixty years; one version mentions his age as forty but the former report is correct. Sayyidina Aadam عليه السلام felt that he should live longer and requested Allah to increase his life but Allah informed him that He had already assigned him a life span and will not add to that. So, Aadam عليه السلام made a gift to Dawood عليه السلام of forty years from his own life so that he may live for a hundred years. We also learn from this *Hadith* that Allah had let Aadam عليه السلام know that he would live for one thousand years. Thus when he was 960 years old, the angel of death presented himself to seize his soul but Sayyidina Aadam عليه السلام was not happy with that and raised an objection that he had still some years to live in the period determined for him. It is clear from this that he had a count of the months and years of his life. The angel of death reminded him that he had gifted forty years of his life to his son, Sayyidina Dawood عليه السلام. However, Sayyidina Aadam عليه السلام denied having made such a gift for he had forgotten that. His denial was out of forgetfulness, not disobedience.

The result of his forgetfulness was that his progeny inherited the weakness and it became a peculiarity of the children of Aadam. Men denied as their progenitor had denied, and just as he had forgotten they too, when they came to earth, forgot their covenant with Allah. This is why Allah has made it necessary that every affair should be recorded to forestall every denier and every forgetfulness.

Lessons and Messages

1. The first thing this *Hadith* confirms is that man was created as we see him now. The Darwanian theory of evolution is rejected by this *Hadith*. His theory–promoted by the scholars of the west and received well by some Muslim minds–propound that man has passed through several evolutionary stages and was an ape before gradually taking the present form. However, Allah has let be known through His Prophet ﷺ over fourteen hundred years ago that man is the best of creation who was formed from the very first day into the perfect model he is today, physically and mentally and morally. His creative nature in the final period will be as it was in the initial period. It will be the same in the last stages of his life as it was in the first stages of his life.

Allah had created Aadam عليه السّلام as a perfect creature and he had no creative defect–mental or physical. He had a height of sixty cubits and this height has been coming down since then and we have reached the present stature. In the Hereafter, the folk of Paradise will attain the stature of Sayyidina Aadam عليه السّلام.

روى البخارى ومسلم فى صحيحيهما أنَّ رَسُوْلَ اللّٰهِ ﷺ قَالَ خَلَقَ اللّٰهُ آدَمَ وَطُوْلُهُ سِتُّوْنَ ذِرعًا ثُمَّ قَالَ اذْهَبْ فَسَلِّمْ عَلٰى أُولٰئِكَ مِنَ الْمَلَآئِكَةِ فَسْتَمِعْ مَا يُحَيُّوْنَكَ فَإِنَّهَا تَحِيَّتُكَ وَتَحِيَّةُ ذُرِّيَّتِكَ فَقَالَ السَّلامُ عَلَيْكُمْ فَقَالُوْا السَّلَامُ عَلَيْكَ وَرَحْمَةُ اللّٰهِ فَزَادُوْهُ وَرَحْمَةُ اللّٰهِ فَكُلُّ مَنْ يَّدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ عَلٰى صُوْرَةِ آدَمَ، فَلَمْ يَزَلِ الْخَلْقُ يَنْقُصُ حَتّٰى الْآنَ.

Translation

[Bukhari and Muslim have transmitted a *Hadith* which quotes the Messenger of Allah ﷺ as saying: Allah created Aadam. His height was sixty cubits (about 30 metres). He said to him, "Go and greet that group of angels and listen to how they reply, for that will be your greeting and the greeting of your offspring." Aadam went and said, "*As- salamu alaykum* (Peace be upon you)." And they answered, "*As-salamu alayka wa rahmat Allah* (Peace be on you and the mercy of Allah)."

So, they added the words "and the mercy of Allah." (The Prophet ﷺ said): So, whoever will enter Paradise will be of the shape and picture of Aadam. Since then the stature of the children of Aadam is being diminished continuously till the present time.] (Bukhari and Muslim)

Let it be understood, too, that Sayyidina Aadam عليه السّلام was not created in phases of birth but straightway in the adult form. But, succeeding human beings are born in stages beginning with a sperm drop in the womb of the mother. It turns into a clot which becomes a lump of flesh which develops bones which are then clothed in flesh. Then the soul is breathed into it. The human baby is thus born by the will of Allah.

2. We also learn from the *Hadith* that characteristics are inherited by mankind from Sayyidina Aadam عليه السّلام whether they are temperamental, physical or mental, like, forgetfulness and denial and refusing something if personal ends are served thereby. Sayyidina Aadam عليه السّلام refused to agree that he had ever made a gift of his age to anyone although his denial was not disobedience. He had forgotten having made the gift.

Anyway, man has inherited his characteristics from Sayyidina Aadam عليه السّلام.

3. The third thing we learn from the *Hadith* is to salute when we meet one another, to say *al-hamdu lillah* when we sneeze and to respond to the sneezer with *yarhamakAllah*. These are teachings not peculiar to Islam alone but they are common to all religions because they are a legacy of our father, Aadam عليه السّلام.

4. The *Hadith* is also the source of faith in fate or divine ordainment. Allah is All-Knowing and Aware and has determined the age of all living beings. There will be no increase in that.

5. The *Hadith* may also be cited to show that Allah has limbs because it mentions His right hand. However, His limbs are not like those of human beings or of other creatures because He is free of a body. He is *Nur* (light) and that is an attribute. An attribute does not have a body; it does not depend on one. Hence His limbs are body-less. But, then, how are they? No one knows that. The answer is كما يليق بشانه "*as is worthy of Him.*" We must believe in that.

It is the belief of those who follow the *Sunnah* (*the ahlas-*

sunnah wal jama'ah) that reference to the limbs of Allah in the *Ahadith* and narrations of the Companions do not mean physical limbs as we know of them. The limbs–hand, feet, fingers, etc.–are according to what behoves Him. We do not know their types or numbers and, at the same time, it is not proper to reject their reality as some people have rejected these *Ahadith*. In other words, it is not proper to affirm the nature of His limbs nor to deny their reality (and the relative *Ahadith*).

لَيْسَ كَمِثْلِهٖ شَىْءٌ وَهُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْبَصِيْرُ

{Nothing is like Him, and He is the Hearer, the Seer.}
(Ash-Shura', 42:11)

6. The *Hadith* also expresses the grandeur of the Prophet of Allah, Sayyidina Dawood عليه السلام. It also confirms the strength of his faith which is reflected in the brightness on his forehead.

7. The *Hadith* tells us that it is right to reckon the years of one's life because Sayyidina Aadam عليه السلام had made a count of the years of his life.

8. The *Hadith* is evidence enough that transactions or dealings and affairs may be put to writing and witnesses may be called. The noble Qur'an has also made it obligatory. The *Shari'ah* has prescribed that recording dealings and having witnesses will ward off disputes and unpleasentness.

Forgetfulness is part of human nature, as is refusal or denying. All descendants of Sayyidina Aadam عليه السلام are prone to it.

This conclusion is accepted by everyone in the world and Islam's instruction for committing to writing and having witnesses is observed the world over. In these times of progress in science and technology, the children of Aadam عليه السلام have discovered novel ways to cheat, to falsify and fake and to plunder. But, like it was on the first day it is as important today to commit to writing every deal and to have witnesses.

The Second Story

Death of Allah's Prophet Sayyidina Aadam عليه السّلام

First Words

The last moments of the life of Sayyidina Aadam عليه السّلام were the last of the first man in the universe. These have come to us from the Holy Prophet ﷺ. His final rites and burial were not performed by man but by heavenly creatures. Man was shown for the first time the method of burial which respects humanity and is the most honourable and dignified method for mankind. All other methods of burial–of putting the corpse in its place–invented by men, later on, are disagreeable and dishonourable to mankind. They vary from burning the dead body into ashes, to burying it in the best of his dresses.

The *Shari'ah* which respects the dead does naturally respect the living to a very great extent.

عَنْ عُتَيٍّ قَالَ رَأَيْتُ شَيْخًا بِالْمَدِيْنَةِ يَتَكَلَّمُ فَسَأَلْتُ عَنْهُ، فَقَالُوا: هٰذَا أُبَيُّ بْنُ كَعْبٍ، فَقَالَ: إِنَّ آدَمَ عليه السّلام، لَمَّا حَضَرَهُ الْمَوْتُ، قَالَ لِبَنِيْهِ: أَيْ بَنِيَّ، إِنِّي أَشْتَهِي مِنْ ثِمَارِ الْجَنَّةِ، فَذَهَبُوْا يَطْلُبُوْنَ لَهُ فَاسْتَقْبَلَتْهُمُ الْمَلائِكَةُ، وَمَعَهُمْ أَكْفَانُهُ وَحَنُوْطُهُ، وَمَعَهُمُ الْفُؤُوْسُ وَالْمَسَاحِي، وَالْمَكَاتِلُ.

فَقَالُوْا لَهُمْ: يَا بَنِي آدَمَ مَا تَرِيْدُوْنَ وَمَا تَطْلُبُوْنَ؟ أَوْ مَا تُرِيْدُوْنَ؟ وَأَيْنَ تَذْهَبُوْنَ؟ قَالُوْا: أَبُوْنَا مَرِيْضٌ، فَاشْتَهَى مِنْ ثِمَارِ الْجَنَّةِ، قَالُوْا لَهُمُ ارْجِعُوْا فَقَدْ قُضِيَ قَضَاءُ أَبِيْكُمْ.

فَجَآءُوْا فَلَمَّا رَأَتْهُمْ حَوَّاءُ عَرَفَتْهُمْ، فَلاذَتْ بِآدَمَ، فَقَالَ: إِلَيْكِ إِلَيْكِ

عَنِّي، فَإِنِّي إِنَّمَا أُوتِيْتُ مِنْ قَبْلِكِ، خَلِّي بَيْنِي وَبَيْنَ مَلآئِكَةِ رَبِّيْ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالىٰ، فَقَبَضُوْهُ، وَغَسَّلُوْهُ، وَكَفَّنُوْهُ، وَحَنَّطُوْهُ، وَحَفَرُوا لَهُ، وَأَلْحَدُوا لَهُ، وَصَلُّوْا عَلَيْهِ، ثُمَّ دَخَلُوْا قَبْرَهُ، فَوَضَعُوْهُ فِيْ قَبْرِهِ، وَوَضَعُوْا عَلَيْهِ اللَّبِنَ، ثُمَّ خَرَجُوْا مِنَ الْقَبْرِ، ثُمَّ حَثَوْا عَلَيْهِ التُّرَابَ، ثُمَّ قَالُوْا: يَا بَنِيْ آدَمَ هٰذِهِ سُنَّتُكُمْ.

Translation

['Utayy bin Damrah As-Sa'di has said that he saw a Shaykh in Madinah engaged in conversation with some people. He enquired about him and was told that he was Ubayy bin Ka'b. Ubayy was saying: When death approached Aadam, he said to his sons, "My sons! I long for the fruit of Paradise." (Before coming down to earth, he lived in Paradise, so he remembered the fruit he ate there at the time of his death.) His sons, then, went out in search of those fruit. On the way, they met the angels who were carrying his shroud and embalmment, tools for digging, swords and spears. They asked them, "O sons of Aadam! What is it that you are looking for? And, where are you going?" They replied, "Our father is ill and craves for the fruit of Paradise."

The angels said to them, "Go back! For, your father is about to die."

And they came there. When Sayyidah Hawwa عليها السّلام saw them, she recognised the angels (and understood that they had come to take his soul). She clung to Aadam عليه السّلام and he said, "Away, away from me! Indeed, I was born before you. Let me be with the angels of my Lord, Blessed and Exalted!"

They took his soul. Then, they gave him a bath, shrouded him (in cloth), embalmed him and dug a grave for him and made it like a niche. Then they offered the funeral *Salat* over him. Then they enterred his grave and put him into it, and placed blocks over it and they came out of it. Then they filled it with earth. Thereafter they said, "O children of Aadam! This is your tradition (for burial of your dead).] (Zawa'id al-Masnad, Narrated: Abdullah bin Al-Imam Ahmad 5/136. Ibn Kathir has termed that the authorities are authentic, *al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah* 1/98, Bayhaqi has said: The *rijal* sources, are strong except Utayy bin Damrah; *Majma' ar-Zawa'id* 8/199)

Explanation

The *Hadith* narrates the story of the death of Sayyidina Aadam عليه السلام. When he was near death he longed for the fruit of Paradise. The life which was nourished with the fruit of Paradise in its inception, ended with a yearning of the same fruit. We can see how he was attached to Paradise. He was not only a dweller of Paradise but also remembered the blessings that were available to him there and were used by him. One who has enjoyed the blessed life of Paradise cannot surely forget it.

He spoke to his children of his longing and they set out to fetch what he wanted. On their mission, they met the angels who were equipped with everything a dead man would need. The angels were sent in human form by Allah so that they may teach the children of Aadam عليه السلام how a dead body may be disposed of–how it may be buried, embalmed, how the grave may be dug, and so on.

Anyway, the angels asked the children of Aadam عليه السلام where they were going, and then informed them that they need not look out for the fruit for their father was about to die and would not require anything in this life anymore.

When the angel of death arrived there, Sayyidah Hawwa عليهاالسلام recognised him and knew immediately that he had come to extract the soul of her husband. She panicked and clung to Sayyidina Aadam عليه السلام who remembered how they had approached the forbidden tree in Paradise, so he asked her to leave him alone with the angels of Allah. They had come to take him to his Lord.

The angels took his soul and then went through the final rites. His children witnessed all that. Graves are of two types–*Lahad* and *Shaq*. Generally, the first type of graves are used; (a hollow is made in the grave and the body is placed in the recess, and it is high enough to allow one to sit inside; it is covered with unburnt bricks and filled with earth.)[1] When the ground is hard, the second type of grave is dug. Minor children are generally buried in such graves. When the grave is dug, a chamber is dug out in its right wall equal to the length of the corpse which is placed inside this chamber.

The grave was dug and his funeral *Salat* offered. He was then placed in the grave. Bricks were placed over the hollow and earth was poured over the bricks. The angels then said to the children of

[1] Additional notes in translation within these brackets.

Aadam عليه السلام that Allah had prefered that method of burial for their dead. In fact, all Prophets and Messenger عليهم السلام have pursued this method and whatever other way of disposal of dead body any people have adopted is contrary to the one shown by Allah and is insulting to humanity.

The Hindus cremate their corpses and that is most degrading as well as punishing. This is why all cellestial religions prescribe burial of the dead, whether it is Christianity or Jewism. There are minor differences; for instance, instead of shrouding, they dress the dead in the best clothes he had and that is against Islamic *Shari'ah*.

The ancient Egyptianhs did not bury their dead but built huge pyramids over them enclosing his jewellery and other possession and food and drink with the corpse. These things were senseless and inhuman.

Some people enclosed their dead in wooden-or stone- coffins which were consigned to the seas or preserved safely. This was a sheer waste of human labour and wealth, and insulting to humanity.

The method shown by Allah is easy for all men and inexpensive. Obviously, everyone cannot afford a wooden coffin or an expensive dress or a pyramid. To cremate a body, as the Hindus do, also requires expensive fuel and allied material.

As against all that, Islam only asks for two simple, unstitched sheets which are wrapped round the body and it is buried in earth. It is easy for everyone equally. However, it is sad that Muslims have foresaken the simple, easy way shown by Islam and made it a custom and tradition to spend thousands–nay, millions–of rupees in the last rites of the dead. On top of that, it is considered a virtuous and rewarding practice.

A Muslim graveyard, today, displays large, well-built graves, domes and competing marvels of costly marble with beautiful designs. They consider it an honour for the dead. However, these contrivances are not helpful to the dead in the least. Is it not a polytheistic practice? Whether it is the tomb of Shah Ghazi in Karachi or Data Darbar in Lahore, Lal Shahbaz Qalandar in Sahwan or Bhitai in Bhit Shah, Khwaja Mu'eenud-din Chishti in Ajmer or the thousands of recluses, monasteries or shrines in the sub-continent–they are all centres of idolatory and polytheism. Instead of true religion, they follow innovative practices and obnoxious

customs. Can a Muslim continue to be worth the name after observing the repulsive rituals there? Is it not a reminder of the Pharoahs? Let every individual of the Islamic *Ummah* ponder over it and let the *Ulama* consider it.

Lessons and Messages

The following knowledge is derived from the *Hadith*:

1. Observance of last rites for the dead, preparing the body and burying it.

2. The method of burial is common to all cellestial religions and was part of the teachings of all Prophets عليهم السلام.

3. The children of Aadam عليه السلام were taught by the angels.

4. All other methods of disposal of dead body are contrary to Allah's directions and against human nature.

5. The *Hadith* confirms the appearance of angels in human form.

6. The *Hadith* teaches us that we must withdraw from our close relatives too if they hinder us from observing the Commands of Allah–as Sayyidina Aadam عليه السلام withdrew from his wife, Sayyidah Hawwa عليها السلام when she held him on seeing the angels. In a way, she was obstructing his meeting with Allah. A man's wife and children are the greatest trial against his faith and religion. That is why Allah has said in the Qur'an:

يَآ اَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ آمَنُوْا إِنَّ مِنْ اَزْوَاجِكُمْ وَاَوْلَادِكُمْ عَدُوًّا لَّكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوْهُمْ ٥

{O you who believe, surely among your wives and your children, there are (some) enemies to you, so be aware of them. (and do not obey them in their such demands)} (At-Taghabun, 64:4)

Allah has also said:

إِنَّمَآ اَمْوَالُكُمْ وَاَوْلَادُكُمْ فِتْنَةٌ ٥

{And know that your riches and your children are a trial.} (Al-Anfal, 8:28)

It is often that a man is put to trial because of his riches and his family and he frequently finds them obstructing him from his religious obligations. He grows miserly and cowardly. The foregoing verses of the Qur'an guide us to be steadfast in observing the Commands of Allah in spite of the obstructions of the family members.

The Third Story

Prophet of Allah Salih عليه السّلام

Introductory Words

The Holy Prophet ﷺ once went by the ruins of the people of Sayyidina Salih عليه السّلام. They had been punished for their disobedience of Allah's Commands when they had hamstrung the she-camel.

The Prophet ﷺ stayed there a while and stopped at the well where the she-camel used to drink water. He narrated to his Companions رضى الله عنهم the story of Sayyidina Salih عليه السّلام. He told them about the place from where the she-camel came and the opening into which she went away. His objective was to caution his people from doing anything similar to what the people of Salih عليه السّلام did. Let us see what the Holy Prophet ﷺ said about the behaviour of these evil people.

روى الإمَام أحمد في مسنده عَنْ جَابِرٍ، قَالَ: لَمَّا مَرَّ رَسُولُ اللّٰهِ ﷺ بِالْحِجْرِ قَالَ: لاتَسْئَلُوْا الآيَاتِ، وَقَدْ سَأَلَهَا قَوْمُ صَالِحٍ، فَكَانَتْ تَرِدُ مِنْ هٰذَا الْفَجِّ، وَتَصْدُرُ مِنْ هٰذَا الْفَجِّ، فَعَتَوْا عَنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّهِمْ فَعَقَرُوْهَا، فَكَانَتْ تَشْرَبُ مَاءَ هُمْ يَوْمًا، وَيَشْرَبُوْنَ لَبَنَهَا يَوْمًا، فَعَقَرُوْهَا فَأَخَذَتْهُمْ صَيْحَةٌ أَهْمَدَ اللّٰه عَزّوجلّ مَنْ تَحْتَ أَدِيْمِ السَّمَاءِ مِنْهُمْ، إلارَجُلا وَاحداً كَانَ فِيْ حَرَمِ اللّٰه عَزّوجلّ، قِيْلَ: مَنْ هُوَ يَا رَسُوْلَ اللّٰه؟ قَالَ: هُوَ أَبُوْرِغَالِ، فَلَمَّا خَرَجَ مِنَ الْحَرَمِ أَصَابَهُ مَا أَصَابَ قَوْمَهُ.

Translation

[Imam Ahmad has narrated from Sayyidina Jabir رضى الله عنه

that when the Prophet ﷺ passed by what used to be the dwellings: al-Hijr, of Thamud, he said: Do not ask for signs. The people of Salih had asked for that. (So they were given the sign of a she-camel which) used to come out from this way (and he pointed to an opening) and returned from that. They transgressed the Command of their Lord and hamstrung her. (The procedure was that) she drank water from the well one day and they drank her milk the next day. (They did not value this favour) but hamstrung her and so were seized by the blast which Allah the Glorious sent to them from the sky–all except one of them who was in the Haram.

He was asked who that person was, and he said, "He was Abu Righal. When he came out of the Haram, he too suffered the same punishment that had befallen his people." (So, all of them perished.)] (Masnud Ahmad 3/296, Ibn Kathir: *Al-Bidayah wa Al-Nihayah*: Al-Bayhaqi: from Bazar. Tabarani in *Al-Awsat Majma' Az-Zawa'id* 6/196)

Explanation

The Prophet ﷺ has mentioned some important points about the punishment inflicted on the Thamud.

The Qur'an has related the story of Prophet Salih عليه السّلام and his people Thamud quite often, now in brief now in detail. However, our field is *Hadith* so we will see the Qur'anic story only in passing. Then we will discuss the significant points of the *Hadith* narrated above.

The She – Camel is Hamstrung

The gist of the story narrated in the Qur'an is:

"Allah had sent Sayyidina Salih عليه السّلام to the Thamud who are also known as 'Aad the Second. In the manner of all Prophets, Sayyidina Salih عليه السّلام too was engaged in inviting his people to follow the right path.

Once his people asked him to show them a sign. They asked him to bring out a pregnant she-camel from a solid rock and if he did that they would believe him as a Prophet of Allah.

Allah, the Gracious, on the supplication of Prophet Salih عليه السّلام, brought out a pregnant she-camel from rock in front of

the people. In spite of this sign, the people did not believe; rather they became more intransigent.

It is the way of Allah that if a people demand a sign and He grants the supplication of His Prophet then He does not give them respite should they persist in their disbelief.

So, the Thamud continued to reject their Prophet Salih عليه السّلام although he had shown them the sign they had demanded.

The she-camel was brought out in an extraordinary manner. Therefore, she was of an exceptional built; she was very tall and fleshy. The other animals fled away on seeing her.

When she came at the well to drink water, she emptied it all. The people could not tolerate that and schemed to eliminate her. Allah had commanded them through Prophet Salih عليه السّلام that they should not harm the she-camel, but they must esteem her. However, they did not heed the command and, ultimately, one of them Qidar bin Salif cut off her shins and she died. They did not stop at that but conspired to slay Prophet Salih عليه السّلام.

Thus, Allah punished them severely and all of them were exterminated. This was the result of rejecting the Prophet, belying his signs and turning away from Truth."

We will discuss the Thamud in the light of the Prophet's account of the punishment meted out to them.

It was during their advance towards Tabuk that the Prophet ﷺ and his Companions had encamped at this place called al-Hijr in the Qur'an. He commented on these people, the Thamud and related the story to his Companions. Some of the Companions رضى الله عنهم drank the water from the well and kneaded flour and cooked food but when the Prophet ﷺ saw that he asked them to throw away the water and upturned their utensils. They gave away the flour to their camels. He then marched away with them from there quickly advising them to fear the punishment of Allah that had inflicted the evil people lest it might inflict them too.

Accordingly, a *Hadith* tells us that the Prophet ﷺ commanded his Companions رضى الله عنهم to seek the forgiveness of Allah weeping the while as they passed through that place. The reason that he gave was:

إِنِّيْ اَخْشٰى أَنْ يُّصِيْبَكُمْ مَّا اَصَابَهُمْ

[I fear lest you suffer what they had suffered (of

punishment).] (Bukhari and Muslim)

Nevertheless, when he was at the well, the Prophet ﷺ showed his Companions رضی الله عنهم the place from where the she-camel came to drink water and from where she returned. And he also gave them some other information about this incident.

It tells us about the Holy Prophet ﷺ that he was a psychologist too and could read the temperament and mind of his Companions. Human beings are inquisitive by nature and they would like to know about what had happened to a people when they pass by their ruins. The Prophet ﷺ respected this inquiring instinct of his Companions and satisfied them with the information.

It is with a reformer and inviter to the path of Allah that he looks out for opportunity to guide people and create an interest in them to receive guidance. Thus, the Holy Prophet ﷺ took advantage of the interest of his Companions رضی الله عنهم and related to them the story of the Thamud and at the same time gave them guidance as we will see.

The Qur'an has told us that the killer of the she-camel was the most wicked man of the tribe of Thamud.

إِذِ انْبَعَثَ أَشْقٰهَا فَقَالَ لَهُمْ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ نَاقَةَ اللّٰهِ وَسُقْيٰهَا فَكَذَّبُوْهُ فَعَقَرُوْهَا

{When the basest of them uprose, then the Messenger of Allah (Prophet Salih) said to them, "It is the she-camel of Allah, so let her drink!" But they belied him and they hamstrung her.}
(Ash-Shams, 91:12-14)

This makes it clear that the most wretched man of the Thamud was the one who hamstrung the camel. We are told in a tradition that his name was Qidar bin Salif.

The Prophet ﷺ has spoken about him in another *Hadith*. Once, he said to Sayyidina Ali bin Abu Talib and Ammar bin Yasir رضی الله عنهما:

["Shall I not tell you about the two most wicked and wretched persons?" They said, "Messenger of Allah, do tell us about them." He continued, "One of them was that red man of the tribe of Thamud who hamstrung the she-camel. And the other, O Ali, will be the one who will smite your forehead drenching your beard with blood."] (Musnad Ahmad 4/263)

Another *Hadith* tells us that the person was the chief of their people, most fierce, wicked and mischievous. (Bukhari and Muslim.)

When this man, cut off the legs of the she-camel, Prophet Salih عليه السّلام told them that they should then wait for the punishment of Allah which would befall them in three days. He said:

تَمَتَّعُوْا فِيْ دَارِكُمْ ثَلٰثَةَ اَيَّامٍ۔ ذٰلِكَ وَعْدٌ غَيْرُ مَكْذُوْبٍ٥

{Enjoy yourselves in your dwellings three days–that is a promise not to be belied.} (Hud, 11:65)

So, they were seized with punishment on the third day. A terrible shriek rent their ears and they died of the shock. That was the end of all the Thamud.

The first *Hadith* tells us that one of them was in the *Ka'bah* at the time of the punishment, so he remained safe from it, but as soon as he emerged out of the *Ka'bah* he was afflicted with the same punishment. He was Abu Righal. The Haram is the fountain of mercy so no one is punished there. Even if a murderer takes shelter in it, he is not punished inside it but compelled to come out of it.

The Prophet ﷺ is also quoted in the main *Hadith* as forbidding his people to demand a sign. If a sign is shown on demand and the people do not mend their ways after seeing it then they would surely be afflicted with punishment.

Lessons and Messages

These are the lessons we learn from this narration:

1. Signs and miracles must not be demanded.

2. We must fear the retribution and punishment of Allah, for the seizing of Allah is severe.

إِنَّ بَطْشَ رَبِّكَ لَشَدِيْدٌ٥

{Surely severe is the grip of your Lord.} (Al-Burooj, 85:12)

3. The she-camel given to Prophet Salih عليه السّلام as a sign by Allah was unusual in its creation, body, size, appearance and habits. She had characteristics distinct from other camels. Thus, her very existence spoke out that she was not a usual species of camel but a sign from Allah.

4. The *Hadith* is evidence that such places may be visited, and one may encamp there, where Allah has inflicted punishment.

Lessons and admonition may be drawn from there. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ had encamped at the well of the Thamud and had related their story to his Companions so that they may take a lesson from it and turn in repentance and seek the forgiveness of Allah. In fact, Allah has Himself commanded us in the Qur'an:

سِيْرُوْا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانْظُرُوْا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ٥

{Travel in the land so that, (you may) see how was the end of the beliers} (Al-An'am, 6:11)

At the same time as taking a lesson, man may develop his powers of understanding and he may achieve an awareness of Allah.

5. The *Hadith* also highlights the fineness of the Prophet's ﷺ knowledge for he pointed out the directions of the she-camels approach and departure. This should not be surprising because his knowledge was based on revelation from Allah Who is All-Knowing and Aware and Whose Knowledge encompasses the past and present of the entire creation.

6. The *Hadith* also confirms that the *Haram* of *Ka'bah* is a sanctuary for everyone whether he is a tyrant or a murderer. No one can be harmed in the *Ka'bah* and man is also safe from divine chastisement here.

وَمَنْ دَخَلَهٗ كَانَ اٰمِنًا٥

{And whoever enters it, is secure.} (Aal-Imran, 3:97)

It was this protection that enabled Abu Righan a man of Thamud to be safe from punishment while he was in the Haram. But, the moment he stepped out of it, he suffered the punishment.

May Allah preserve all Muslims from punishment. *Aameen!*

The Fourth Story

Undevided Worship –Two Examples Sayyidah Hajirah عليها السّلام and Sayyidina Isma'il عليه السّلام

First Words

The dedication to Islam of the friend of Allah, Sayyidina Ibrahim عليه السّلام and his family is an example for every believer. It should arouse a deep sense of spiritual feelings in him. The son of this Prophet followed in his footsteps and came to be recognised as *Zabeeh Allah.*[1] He was Sayyidina Isma'il عليه السّلام. Father and son have left behind such an unparalleled example of self-sacrifice that it is difficult to emulate.

Sayyidah Hajirah عليها السّلام, the mother of Sayyidina Isma'il عليه السّلام, was the slave of Sayyidah Sarah عليها السّلام the first wife of Sayyidina Ibrahim عليه السّلام. When a long time had passed and they had no children, she gave away her slave to Sayyidina Ibrahim عليه السّلام (who married her) that they may have offspring. Indeed, the Decider of fate gave mankind the example of dedication that Sayyidina Isma'il عليه السّلام was through Sayyidah Hajirah عليها السّلام. He was recognised as *Zabeeh Allah* and had the unique distinction of becoming the ancestor of the pride of mankind, their benefactor, the Imam of all Prophets, mercy to the worlds, Prophet Muhammad عليه الصّلوٰة والسّلام.

The follwoing *Hadith* is an account of Sayyidina Isma'il عليه السّلام and Sayyidah Hajirah عليها السّلام as narrated by RasoolAllah Muhammad ﷺ.

روى البخاري في صحيحه: عَنْ سَعِيْدِ بنْ جَبَيْرْ قَال: قَالَ ابْنُ عَبَّاسْ

أَوَّلَ مَا اتَّخَذَ النِّسَاءُ الْمِنْطَقَ أُمُّ إِسْمَاعِيْلَ، اتَّخَذَتْ مِنْطَقاً لَتُعَفِّيَ أَثَرَهَا عَلٰى

[1] Literally, *an offering for Allah.*

سَارَةَ، ثُمَّ جَاءَ بِهَا إِبْرَاهِيْمُ وَبِابْنِهَا إِسْمَاعِيْلَ وَهِيَ تُرْضِعُهُ، حَتّٰى وَضَعَهُمَا عِنْدَالْبَيْتِ، عِنْدَ دَوْحَةٍ فَوْقَ زَمْزَمَ فِيْ أَعْلَى الْمَسْجِدِ، وَلَيْسَ بِمَكَّةَ يَوْمَئِذٍ أَحَدٌ، وَلَيْسَ بِهَا مَآءٌ، فَوَضَعَهُمَا هُنَالِكَ، وَوَضَعَ عِنْدَهُمَا جِرَاباً فِيْهِ تَمْرٌ، وَسِقَاءً فِيْهِ مَاءٌ، ثُمَّ قَفّٰى إِبْرَاهِيْمُ مُنْطَلِقاً، فَتَبِعَتْهُ أُمُّ إِسْمَاعِيْلَ، فَقَالَتْ: يَا إِبْرَاهِيْمُ أَيْنَ تَذْهَبُ وَتَتْرُكُنَا بِهٰذَا الْوَادِيْ الَّذِيْ لَيْسَ فِيْهِ إِنْسٌ وَّلَا شَيْءٌ؟ فَقَالَتْ لَهُ ذَالِكَ مِرَارًا، وَجَعَلَ لا يَلْتَفِتُ إِلَيْهَا، فَقَالَتْ لَهُ: آللّٰهُ الَّذِيْ أَمَرَكَ بِهٰذَا؟ قَالَ: نَعَمْ. قَالَتْ إِذَنْ لَّا يُضَيِّعُنَا، ثُمَّ رَجَعَتْ.

فَانْطَلَقَ إِبْرَاهِيْمُ، حَتّٰى إِذَا كَانَ عِنْدَ الثَّنِيَّةِ حَيْثُ لَا يَرَوْنَهُ اسْتَقْبَلَ بِوَجْهِهِ الْبَيْتَ ثُمَّ دَعَا بِهٰؤُلَآءِ الْكَلِمَاتِ وَرَفَعَ يَدَيْهِ فَقَالَ: (رَبَّنَا إِنِّى اَسْكَنْتُ مِنْ ذُرِّيَتِيْ بِوَادٍغَيْرِذِيْ زَرْعٍ عِنْدَ بَيْتِكَ الْمُحَرَّمِ) حَتّٰى بَلَغَ (يَشْكُرُوْنَ).
[إبراهيم: ٣٧]

وَجَعَلَتْ أُمُّ إِسْمَاعِيْلَ تُرْضِعُ إِسْمَاعِيْلَ وَتَشْرَبُ مِنْ ذٰلِكَ الْمَآءِ، حَتّٰى إِذَا نَفِدَ مَا فِي السِّقَاءِ عَطِشَتْ، وَعَطِشَ ابْنُهَا، وَجَعَلَتْ تَنْظُرُ إِلَيْهِ يَتَلَوّٰى، أَوْ قَالَ يَتَلَبَّطُ، فَانْطَلَقَتْ كَرَاهِيَةَ اَنْ تَنْظُرَ إِلَيْهِ، فَوَجَدَتِ الصَّفَا أَقْرَبَ جَبَلٍ فِي الْاَرْضِ يَلِيْهَا، فَقَامَتْ عَلَيْهِ، ثُمَّ اسْتَقْبَلَتِ الْوَادِيَ تَنْظُرُ، هَلْ تَرَى أَحَدًا، فَلَمْ تَرَ أَحَدًا، فَهَبَطَتْ مِنَ الصَّفَا حَتّٰى إِذَا بَلَغَتِ الْوَادِيَ رَفَعَتْ طَرَفَ دِرْعِهَا، ثُمَّ سَعَتْ سَعْيَ الْاِنْسَانِ الْمَجْهُوْدِ، حَتّٰى جَاوَزَتِ الْوَادِيَ، ثُمَّ اَتَتِ الْمَرْوَةَ، فَقَامَتْ عَلَيْهَا، فَنَظَرَتْ هَلْ تَرَى أَحَدًا، فَلَمْ تَرَ أَحَدًا فَفَعَلَتْ ذٰلِكَ سَبْعَ مَرَّاتٍ.

قَالَ ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ: قَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ فَذٰلِكَ سَعْيُ النَّاسِ بَيْنَهُمَا.

فَلَمَّا أَشْرَفَتْ عَلَى الْمَرْوَةِ سَمِعَتْ صَوْتاً، فَقَالَتْ: صَهٍ، تُرِيْدُ نَفْسَهَا، ثُمَّ تَسَمَّعَتْ أَيْضًا، فَقَالَتْ: قَدْ أَسْمَعْتَ إِنْ كَانَ عِنْدَكَ غِوَاثٌ، فَإِذَا هِيَ بِالْمَلَكِ

عِنْدَ مَوْضِعِ زَمْزَمَ، فَبَحَثَ بِعَقِبِهِ، أَوْ قَالَ: بِجَنَاحِهِ، حَتَّى ظَهَرَ الْمَاءُ، فَجَعَلَتْ تُحَوِّضُهُ، وَتَقُوْلُ: بِيَدِهَا هٰكَذَا، وَجَعَلَتْ تَغْرِفُ مِنَ الْمَاءِ فِي سِقَائِهَا، وَهُوَ يَفُوْرُ بَعْدَ مَا تَغْرِفُ.

قَالَ ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ: قَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ: يَرْحَمُ اللّٰهُ أُمَّ إِسْمَاعِيْلَ، لَوْ تَرَكَتْ زَمْزَمَ، أَوْ قَالَ: لَوْ لَمْ تَغْرِفْ مِنَ الْمَاءِ، لَكَانَتْ زَمْزَمُ عَيْناً مَّعِيْناً.

قَالَ فَشَرِبَتْ، وَأَرْضَعَتْ وَلَدَهَا، فَقَالَ لَهَا الْمَلَكُ: لا تَخَافُوا الضَّيْعَةَ، فَإِنَّ هَاهُنَا بَيْتَ اللّٰهِ يَبْنِيْ هٰذَا الْغُلامُ وَأَبُوْهُ، وَإِنَّ اللّٰهَ لا يُضِيْعُ أَهْلَهُ، وَكَانَ الْبَيْتُ مُرْتَفِعاً مِّنَ الأَرْضِ كَالرَّابِيَةِ، تَأْتِيْهِ السُّيُولُ، فَتَأْخُذُ عَنْ يَّمِيْنِهِ وَشِمَالِهِ.

فَكَانَتْ كَذٰلِكَ حَتَّى مَرَّتْ بِهِمْ رُفْقَةٌ مِّنْ جُرْهُمَ، أَوْ أَهْلُ بَيْتٍ مِّنْ جُرْهُمَ مُقْبِلِيْنَ مِنْ طَرِيْقِ كَدَاءٍ، فَنَزَلُوْا فِيْ أَسْفَلِ مَكَّةَ، فَرَأَوْا طَائِرًا عَائِفاً، فَقَالُوْا: إِنَّ هٰذَا الطَّائِرَ لَيَدُوْرُ عَلَى مَاءٍ، لَعَهْدُنَا بِهٰذَا الْوَادِيْ وَمَا فِيْهِ مَاءٌ، فَأَرْسَلُوْا جَرِيًّا أَوْ جَرِيَّيْنِ، فَإِذَاهُمْ بِالْمَاءِ، فَرَجَعُوا، فَأَخْبَرُوْهُمْ بِالْمَاءِ، فَأَقْبَلُوْا، قَالَ: وَأُمُّ إِسْمَاعِيْلَ عِنْدَ الْمَاءِ، فَقَالُوْا: أَتَأْذَنِيْنَ لَنَا أَنْ نَنْزِلَ عِنْدَكِ؟ فَقَالَتْ: نَعَمْ، وَلٰكِنْ لا حَقَّ لَكُمْ فِيْ الْمَاءِ، قَالُوْا: نَعَمْ قَالَ ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ: قَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ: فَأَلْفَى ذٰلِكَ أُمَّ إِسْمَاعِيْلَ، وَهِيَ تُحِبُّ الإِنْسَ فَنَزَلُوْا، وَأَرْسَلُوْا إِلَى أَهْلِيْهِمْ، فَنَزَلُوْا مَعَهُمْ، حَتَّى إِذَا كَانَ بِهَا أَهْلُ أَبْيَاتٍ مِّنْهُمْ، وَشَبَّ الْغُلامُ، وَتَعَلَّمَ الْعَرَبِيَّةَ مِنْهُمْ، وَأَنْفَسَهُمْ، وَأَعْجَبَهُمْ حِيْنَ شَبَّ، فَلَمَّا أَدْرَكَ زَوَّجُوْهُ امْرَأَةً مِّنْهُمْ.

وَمَاتَتْ أُمُّ إِسْمَاعِيْلَ فَجَاءَ إِبْرٰهِيْمُ بَعْدَ مَا تَزَوَّجَ إِسْمَاعِيْلُ يُطَالِعُ تَرِكَتَهُ، فَلَمْ يَجِدْ إِسْمَاعِيْلَ، فَسَأَلَ امْرَأَتَهُ عَنْهُ، فَقَالَتْ: خَرَجَ يَبْتَغِيْ لَنَا، ثُمَّ سَأَلَهَا عَنْ عَيْشِهِمْ وَهَيْئَتِهِمْ، فَقَالَتْ: نَحْنُ بِشَرٍّ، نَحْنُ فِيْ ضِيْقٍ وَشِدَّةٍ، فَشَكَتْ إِلَيْهِ. قَالَ: فَإِذَا جَاءَ زَوْجُكِ فَاقْرَئِيْ عَلَيْهِ السَّلامَ، وَقُوْلِيْ لَهُ يُغَيِّرْ عَتَبَةَ بَابِهِ، فَلَمَّا جَاءَ إِسْمَاعِيْلُ، كَأَنَّهُ آنَسَ شَيْئًا، فَقَالَ: هَلْ جَاءَكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ؟ قَالَتْ: نَعَمْ،

جَاءَ نَا شَيْخٌ كَذَا وَكَذَا، فَسَأَلَنَا عَنْكَ، فَأَخْبَرْتُهُ، وَسَأَلَنِي: كَيْفَ عَيْشُنَا؟ فَأَخْبَرْتُهُ أَنَّا فِي جَهْدٍ وَّشِدَّةٍ.

قَالَ: فَهَلْ أَوْصَاكِ بِشَيْءٍ؟ قَالَتْ: نَعَمْ، أَمَرَنِي أَنْ أَقْرَأَ عَلَيْكَ السَّلاَمَ، وَيَقُوْلُ: غَيِّرْ عَتَبَةَ بَابِكَ، قَالَ: ذَاكِ أَبِيْ، وَقَدْ أَمَرَنِيْ أَنْ أُفَارِقَكِ، الْحَقِي بِأَهْلِكِ، فَطَلَّقَهَا وَتَزَوَّجَ مِنْهُمْ أُخْرَى.

فَلَبِثَ عَنْهُمْ إِبْرَاهِيْمُ مَا شَآءَ اللّٰه، ثُمَّ أَتَاهُمْ بَعْدُ فَلَمْ يَجِدْهُ، فَدَخَلَ عَلَى امْرَأَتِهِ فَسَأَلَهَا عَنْهُ، فَقَالَتْ: خَرَجَ يَبْتَغِيْ لَنَا. قَالَ: كَيْفَ أَنْتُمْ؟ وَسَأَلَهَا عَنْ عَيْشِهِمْ وَهَيْئَتِهِمْ، فَقَالَتْ: نَحْنُ بِخَيْرٍ وَّسَعَةٍ، وَأَثْنَتْ عَلَى اللّٰه، فَقَالَ: مَا طَعَامُكُمْ، قَالَتِ: اللَّحْمُ. قَالَ: فَمَا شَرَابُكُمْ؟ قَالَتِ: الْمَآءُ. قَالَ: اللّٰهُمَّ بَارِكْ لَهُمْ فِي اللَّحْمِ وَالْمَآءِ.

قَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَّهُمْ يَوْمَئِذٍ حَبٌّ، وَلَوْ كَانَ لَهُمْ دَعَا لَهُمْ فِيْهِ. قَالَ: فَهُمَا لا يَخْلُو عَلَيْهِمَا أَحَدٌ بِغَيْرِ مَكَّةَ إِلا لَمْ يُوَافِقَاهُ. قَالَ: فَإِذَاجَاءَ زَوْجُكِ فَاقْرِئِيْ عَلَيْهِ السَّلاَمَ، وَمُرِيْهِ يُثْبِتُ عَتَبَةَ بَابِهِ، فَلَمَّا جَاءَ إِسْمَاعِيْلُ قَالَ: هَلْ أَتَاكُمْ مِنْ أَحَدٍ؟ قَالَتْ: نَعَمْ، أَتَانَا شَيْخٌ حَسَنُ الْهَيْئَةِ، وَأَثْنَتْ عَلَيْهِ، فَسَأَلَنِيْ عَنْكَ، فَأَخْبَرْتُهُ، فَسَأَلَنِيْ: كَيْفَ عَيْشُنَا؟ فَأَخْبَرْتُهُ أَنَّا بِخَيْرٍ.

قَالَ: فَأَوْصَاكِ بِشَيْءٍ، قَالَتْ: نَعَمْ، هُوَيَقْرَأُ عَلَيْكَ السَّلاَمَ، وَيَأْمُرُكَ أَنْ تُثْبِتَ عَتَبَةَ بَابِكَ. قَالَ: ذَاكِ أَبِيْ، وَأَنْتِ الْعَتَبَةُ، أَمَرَنِيْ أَنْ أُمْسِكَكِ.

ثُمَّ لَبِثَ عَنْهُمْ مَّا شَاءَ اللّٰه ثُمَّ جَاءَ بَعْدَ ذٰلِكَ وَإِسْمَاعِيْلُ يَبْرِيْ نَبْلا لَهُ تَحْتَ دَوْحَةٍ قَرِيْباً مِنْ زَمْزَمَ، فَلَمَّا رَآهُ قَامَ إِلَيْهِ، فَصَنَعَا كَمَا يَصْنَعُ الْوَالِدُ بِالْوَلَدِ، وَالْوَلَدُ بِالْوَالِدِ، ثُمَّ قَالَ: يَا إِسْمَاعِيْلُ، إِنَّ اللّٰهَ أَمَرَنِيْ بِأَمْرٍ. قَالَ: فَاصْنَعْ مَا أَمَرَكَ رَبُّكَ. قَالَ: وَتُعِيْنُنِيْ؟ قَالَ: وَأُعِيْنُكَ، قَالَ: فَإِنَّ اللّٰهَ أَمَرَنِيْ أَنْ أَبْنِيَ هَا هُنَا بَيْتًا وَّ أَشَارَ إِلَى أَكَمَةٍ مُّرْتَفِعَةٍ عَلَى مَا حَوْلَهَا.

قَالَ فَعِنْدَ ذَالِكَ رَفَعَا الْقَوَاعِدَ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ، فَجَعَلَ إِسْمَاعِيْلُ يَأْتِيْ بِالْحِجَارَةِ، وَإِبْرَاهِيْمُ يَبْنِي، حَتّٰى إِذَا ارْتَفَعَ الْبِنَاءُ، جَاءَ بِهٰذَا الْحَجَرِ، فَوَضَعَهُ لَهُ، فَقَامَ عَلَيْهِ، وَهُوَ يَبْنِيْ، وَإِسْمَاعِيْلُ يُنَاوِلُهُ الْحِجَارَةَ، وَهُمَا يَقُوْلَانِ (رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ).

قَالَ فَجَعَلَا يَبْنِيَانِ حَتّٰى يَدُوْرَا حَوْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَهُمَا يَقُوْلَانِ (رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ).

Translation

Imam Bukhari has transmitted in his Sahih from Sayyidina Sa'eed bin Jubayr رضی الله عنه that Sayyidina Ibn Abba's رضی الله عنه said:

[The first lady to use a girdle was the mother of Isma'il. She used a girdle so that she might hide her tracks from Sarah. Ibrahim brought her and her son Isma'il while she used to nurse him at her breast, to a place near the *Ka'bah* (which was not in a constructed form then) under a tree on the spot of Zamzam (where it is located today), at the highest place in the Mosque. During those days there was nobody in Makkah nor was there any water. So, he made them sit there and placed near them a leather bag containing some dates and a small water-skin containing some water, and set out homeward. Isma'il's mother followed him saying, "O Ibrahim, where are you going, leaving us in this valley where there is no person whose company we may enjoy, nor is there anything (to enjoy)?" She repeated that to him several times, but he did not look back at her. Then she asked him, "Has Allah ordered you to do so?" He said, "Yes", and she asserted, "Then He will not neglect us", and returned while Ibrahim proceeded onwards until he was at the *Thaniyah* where they could not see him. Here, he turned towards the *Ka'bah* and raising both hands, invoked Allah making the following supplication:

> رَبَّنَا إِنِّي أَسْكَنْتُ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي بِوَادٍ غَيْرِ ذِي زَرْعٍ عِنْدَ بَيْتِكَ الْمُحَرَّمِ ٥
> "Our Lord! I have made some of my progeny to dwell in a valley uncultivable, near Your Sacred House. Our Lord!

That they may establish *Salah;* so make the hearts of some of mankind to yearn towards them, and provide them with fruits, that they may give thanks."[1]

Isma'il's mother went on suckling Isma'il and drinking from the water (she had). When the water in the water-skin had all been used up, she became thirsty and her child also became thirsty. She started looking at him as he was tossing in agony. She left him, for she could not endure looking at him, and found that the mountain As-Safa was the nearest mountain to her on that land. She stood on it and started looking at the valley keenly so that she might see somebody, but she did not find anyone. Then she descended from As-Safa and when she reached the valley, she tucked up her robe and ran in the valley like one in distress till she crossed the valley and reached mount Al-Marwa where she stood and started looking–was there anyone?–but there was no one. She repeated (the running between the mountains) seven times.

Ibn Abbas said that the Prophet ﷺ said: The *Sa'ee* (walking) between As-Safa and Al-Marwah has its source in this (her runing).

When she reached Al-Marwah (for the last time) she heard a voice and asked herself to be quiet, and listened attentively. She heard the voice again and said, "O (whoever you may be!) You have made me hear your voice; have you got anything to help me?" And, behold! She saw an angel at the place of Zamzam, digging the earth with-his heel (or his wing), till water flowed from there. She started to make something like a basin around it, using her hands in this way, and started filling her water-skin with her hands, and the water was flowing out after she had scooped some of it.

Ibn Abbas said that the Prophet ﷺ remarked: May Allah bestow mercy on the mother of Isma'il! Had she let the Zamzam (flow without trying to control it and scooped its water to fill her water-skin), it would have been a stream flowing on the surface of earth. He further said:

Then she drank (water) and suckled her child. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid of being neglected for this is the

[1] Al-Qur'an, *Ibrahim*, 14: 37.

House of Allah which will be built by this boy and his father, and Allah never neglects His people." The House (i.e. the *Ka'bah*) at that time was on a high place resembling a hillock, and when torrents came, they flowed to its right and left. She lived in that way till some people from the tribe of Jurhum or a family from Jurhum passed by her and her child, as they (i.e. the Jurhum people) were coming through the way of Kada'. They landed in the lower part of Makkah where they saw a bird that had the habit of flying around water and not leaving it. They said, "This bird must be flying around water though we know that there is no water in this valley." They sent one or two men to reconnoiter and they discovered the source of water and returned to inform them of their discovery. So, they all came (to it). Isma'il's mother was sitting near the water and they asked her, "Will you permit us to stay with you?" She consented, "Yes, but you will have no right over the water." They agreed to that condition.

The Prophet ﷺ continued:

The mother of Isma'il was pleased with the situation as she loved company of people. So, they settled there, and later on, they sent for their families who came and settled with them and some families became permanent residents there. The child (Isma'il) grew up and learnt Arabic from them and (his virtues) caused them to love and admire him as he grew up, and when he reached the age of puberty they married him to one of their women.

The mother of Isma'il died (meanwhile), and Ibrahim came, after he had married, in order to see his wife and son whom he had left a long time ago. But, he did not find Isma'il there. When he asked Isma'il's wife about him, she siad that he was away in search of livelihood. Then he asked her about their way of living and their condition, and she complained, "We are living in a misery, we live in hardship and destitution."

He said, "When your husband returns, convey my salutation to him and ask him to change the threshold of the gate (of his house)."

When Isma'il came, he seemed to have felt something

unusual, so he asked his wife, "Has anyone visited You?" She replied, "Yes! An old man of such-and-such a description came and asked me about you and I informed him, and he asked about our state of living, and I told him that we were living in hardship and poverty." On that, Isma'il asked, "Did he give you any instructions?" "Yes", she replied, "He asked me to convey his salutation to you and to tell you to change the threshold of your gate."

Isma'il said, "He was my father, and he has ordered me to divorce you. Go back to your family." So, he divorced her and married another woman from amongst them (the Jurhum).

Then, Ibrahim stayed away from them for a period as long as Allah wished and called on them again but did not find Isma'il. So he came to Isma'il's wife and asked her about Isma'il. She said, "He has gone in search of our livelihood." Ibrahim asked her, "How are you getting on?" asking her about their sustenance and living. She replied, "We are prosperous and well-off", and she praised Allah, the Glorious. Ibrahim asked, "What kind of food do you eat?" She said, "Meat." He said, "What do you drink?" She said, "Water." He said, "O Allah! Bless their meat and water."

The Prophet ﷺ commented: At that time they did not have grain, and if they had grain, he would also have invoked Allah to bless it.

He added: If somebody has only these two things as his sustenance, his health and disposition will be badly affected unless he lives in Makkah.

He then said: Then Ibrahim said to the wife of Isma'il, "When your husband comes, give my regards to him and tell him that he should keep firm the threshold of his gate."

When Isma'il came back, he asked his wife, "Did anyone call on you?" She replied, "Yes, a good-looking old man came to me, "So she praised him and said, "He asked me about you, and I informed him, and he asked about our livelihood and I told him that we were in a good condition." Isma'il asked her, "Did he give you any advice?" She said, "Yes! He asked me to give you his regards and ordered that you should keep firm the

threshold of your gate." On that Isma'il said, "He was my father, and you are the threshold (of the gate). He has ordered me to kep you with me." Then Ibrahim stayed away from them for a period as long as Allah wished, and called on them afterwards. He found Isma'il under a tree near Zamzam, sharpening his arrows. When he saw Ibrahim, he rose up to welcome him (and they greeted each other as a father does with his son or a son does with his father.)

Ibrahim said, "O Isma'il! Allah has given me an order." Isma'il said, "Do what your Lord has ordered you to do." Ibrahim asked, "Will you help me?" Isma'il said, "I will help you." Ibrahim said, "Allah has ordered me to build a house here, pointing to a hillock higher than the land surrounding it."

The Prophet ﷺ added: Then they raised the foundations of the Hosue (the *Ka'bah*), Isma'il brought the stones and Ibrahim built (the walls). When the walls became high, Isma'il brought this stone (the one called *Maqam Ibrahim* and termed in the Qur'an as a sign of Allah.) He put it for Ibrahim who stood over it and carried on building, while Isma'il handed him the stones. Both of them were saying:

رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ ٥

"Our Lord! Accept from us (this service). You, only You, are the Hearer, the Knower!"(1)

They were both thus engaged in building (the House) and going round the *Ka'bah*. They (on completion of their work) supplicated:

رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ ٥

"Our Lord! Accept (this service) from us. Indeed, You are the Hearer, the Knower!"(1)]

(It is transmitted by Bukhari. *Hadith* no.3364)

Explanation

The Holy Prophet ﷺ has narrated the story of Sayyidah Hajirah عليها السلام and Sayyidina Isma'il عليه السلام. The mother and son were the irst people to take up residence in the sacred city of Makkah and to nhabit it. In fact, they landed at the very place that was one of the nost sacred place on earth. The *Bayt Al-Haram* is there and

Al-Qur'an, *Al-Baqarah*, 2: 127.

Muslims will go circumambulating it till the Last Day. It is the *qiblah* and here Sayyidinah Isma'il عليه السّلام was the first to receive revelation and Sayyidina Muhammad RasulAllah ﷺ received the last revelation. Here are the great signs of the Lord–the *Maqam Ibrahim*, the Black stone, the *Zamzam*, As-Safa and Al-Marwah.

Sayyidina Ibrahim عليه السّلام was the friend of Allah and a great Prophet of Allah. He was on the upright religion. He had two wives. Sayyidah Sarah عليها السّلام was the mother of Sayyidinah Ishaq عليه السّلام and she lived in Syria, Sayyidina Ishaq عليه السّلام built a House of Allah in Palestine known as Al-Quds or Al-Aqsa, which was the first *qiblah*. Thousands of Prophets were born here and lived here. Allah blessed it as He has said: بَارَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ (the precincts whereof We have blessed.)[1]

His second wife was Sayyidah Hajirah عليها السّلام. Sayyidina Isma'il was born to her Sayyidina Ibrahim عليه السّلام brought them–mother and son–from Syria to Makkah at the command of Allah. At that time there was no living soul at Makkah and, in fact, no support of life was available here–neither trees nor cultivation, neither greenery nor water. It was a desolate, uninhabited valley amid unfriendly rocky land.

Allah, the Exalted, had blessed Sayyidina Ibrahim عليه السّلام with a son in his old age. This caused Sayyidah Sarah عليها السّلام to fear that his second wife Hajirah عليها السّلام might become his favourite. Sayyidah Hajirah عليها السّلام too was concerned that Sarah عليها السّلام might harm her or the child. That is why when she set towards Makkah, she tied a girdle round her waist in such a way that it erased traces of her footsteps behind her so that Sarah عليها السّلام might not follow her.

Allah had commanded Ibrahim عليه السّلام to leave Hajirah عليها السّلام and her new-born Isma'il عليه السّلام at Makkah, at *Bayt Al-Atiq*[2] (The *Bayt Allah* was not yet in a building form but its place was known because the previous building was washed away in the deluge of Sayyidina Nuh عليه السّلام.)

The distance from Palestine to the inhospitable valley was difficult and very risky to life.

This was a severe trying period for Sayyidina Ibrahim عليه السّلام. He had invoked Allah much for a child and was blessed with a son ultimately in old age. Then, he was asked to leave mother and son at

[1] Al-Isra, 17: 1. [2] Another name for House of Allah.

a desolate place where even water was not to be had.

No one can fathom the wisdom of Allah and His powers. He provides man with security right at the place where there is the greatest danger. He let Sayyidina Musa عليه السلام live and grow at the house of Fir'awn himself who was his greatest enemy. He turned the fire, that can incinerate man in no time, into a cool garden for Sayyidina Ibrahim عليه السلام. These are small signs of His Power. On the face of it man sees difficulty and loss in something but the Real Owner has placed goodness and blessings in that. He has said:

عَسٰٓى اَنْ تَكْرَهُوْا شَيْئًا وَّهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَعَسٰٓى اَنْ تُحِبُّوْا شَيْئًا وَّهُوَ شَرٌّ لَّكُمْ ○

{It may be that you abhor a thing, while it is good for you, and it may be that you love a thing, while it is bad for you.}

(Al-Baqarah 2:216)

Hence, this trial seemed to spell out disaster and annihilation for the Friend of Allah عليه السلام but there turned out to be blessings, unlimited, for mankind. It is apparent to all mankind, and all Muslims enjoy the blessings and mercy that accrue from that sacrifice.

The growing, nurture and rearing of *Zabeeh Allah*, Isma'il عليه السلام, at this isolated, water-less land, gave mankind the most sacred place on earth. They were provided with the city by which the Lord of the worlds took an oath. It has the centre of the manifestation and light of the Glorious Lord, the *Bayt Allah.*

It is the city on earth where worship, goodness and favour are at their extreme and unmatched at any other place. The Master of all masters has debarred infidelity and infidels and polytheists from this place. May He Keep it pure from them always!

The sacrifice of the Friend of Allah عليه السلام and the perseverance of *Zabeeh Allah* عليه السلام gave mankind that town which was the birth-place of the greatest of men, a favour to them, a blessing for the worlds, the unlettered Prophet صَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمْ. May blessings of Allah and peace be on him.

Surely, Allah made Ibrahim عليه السلام and Isma'il عليه السلام as the means of these blessings and favours. He thus caused them to be remembered much and always.

ذٰلِكَ فَضْلُ اللّٰهِ يُؤْتِيْهِ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ○

{That is the bounty of Allah which He gives to whom He

wills.[1]}

Sayyidina Ibrahim عليه السلام took the new-born and his mother away from the land of cool breeze, beautiful gardens, flowing springs and fertile fields to an uncultivable, barren wildernes. He took them away from the sacred land of Palestine to a desert and left them in the shade of a tree where for niles there was no sign of human life. He retraced his steps without waiting a while or building for them a home or erecting a tent. He left them without food and drink and without protection from wild animals. He had bowed down before the command of Allah!

Imagine the plight of Sayyidah Hajirah عليها السلام. She was helpless in a strange land, all alone, without company, no human being in sight and she had no food or drink. She had her infant to look after–her love, her darling. Her greatest wordly support, her husband, was leaving her alone and going away without so much as consoling words. She followed him, pleaded with him but he had no reply, no words for her. Was it a command of Allah? Yes, was the only reply. With faith and belief, Sayyidah Hajirah عليها السلام spoke firmly–a historical sentence–إذن لا يضيعنا "Then He will not neglect us."

This, indeed, is Islam: to submit to the command of Allah. Ibrahim عليه السلام demonstrated this behaviour and the Qur'an testifies it:

إِذْ قَالَ لَهُ رَبُّهُ أَسْلِمْ قَالَ أَسْلَمْتُ لِرَبِّ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ٥

{(Recall) when his Lord said to him, "Submit", he said, "I submit myself to the Lord of the worlds."} (Al-Baqarah, 2:131)

Anyway, Ibrahim's عليه السلام answer gave her peace and satisfaction and she knew that the command of Allah was being observed.

On his part, Ibrahim عليه السلام was returning after bowing down to the command of Allah and ignoring the natural love for his wife and child. However, he had the instinctive love inside him and as he reached a point where his wife could not have seen him he turned his face towards the *Ka'bah*, raised his hands and made a sincere, heart–warming supplication to Allah:

رَبَّنَا إِنِّيْ أَسْكَنْتُ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِيْ بِوَادٍ غَيْرِ ذِيْ زَرْعٍ عِنْدَ بَيْتِكَ الْمُحَرَّمِ...لَعَلَّهُمْ يَشْكُرُوْنَ٥

[1] Al-Qur'an, Al-Hadeed, 57:21.

{"Our Lord! Surely I have made some of my progeny to dwell in a valley uncultivable, near Your Sacred House. Our Lord! That they may establish *Salah* (prayer); so make the hearts of some of mankind to yearn towards them, and provide them with fruits, that they may give thanks.} (Ibrahim, 14:37)

The Merciful Lord accepted the plea of His friend. The mother of Isma'il used for some days the water in the water–skin which Ibrahim عليه السلام had left for them. They also used the dates that he had left behind. She suckled the infant. But, the stock of water and dates were soon exhausted and she felt thirsty and hungry. She would have endured her plight but how could she stand to see her darling uncomfortable; he could not complain but was obviously in distress. She could not watch him and she had no power or ability to mitigate his pain.

In her predicament, Sayyidah Hajirah عليها السلام ascended the nearest height that was mount As-Safa that perhaps she might spy some traveller with water and food, something to allow them to subsist. But, she saw no one although she let her eyes wanter deep into the desert. All she could see was wilderness, no sign of life or life support. Dispirited she descended from As-Safa and walked hopefully to the second mountain there, the Marwah. There, too, she threw her sight deep into empty space but her sight returned to her as luckless as before. She came down from Al-Marwah and nervously went again to As-Safa. Not knowing what to do, she went from here to Al-Marwah and again to As-Safa. She moved from here to there seven times and each time she cast her eyes on her child. These seven rounds that Sayyidah Hajirah عليها السلام made became part of rites of pilgrimage for all time to come. This is the *Sa'ee* the Muslims will continue to perform between As-Safa and Al-Marwah and it gives us the message to carry on the *Sa'ee*–the endeavour–in the face of helplessness and to keep occupied in their struggle and effort. Allah, the Lord of the worlds, has prescribed the seven circuits of *Sa'ee* as part of Hajj and Umrah. He has said:

إِنَّ الصَّفَا وَالْمَرْوَةَ مِنْ شَعَائِرِ اللّٰهِ فَمَنْ حَجَّ الْبَيْتَ أَوِاعْتَمَرَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِ أَنْ يَطَّوَّفَ بِهِمَا

{Surely As-Safa and Al-Marwah are among the emblems of

Allah; so whosoever performs the Hajj to the House (of Allah), or performs Umrah, there is no blame on him if he goes around them.} (Al-Baqarah, 2: 158)

When she was again at As-Safa at the end of her seventh round, she suddenly perceived a sound. She became very alert and asked herself to be quiet and pricked up her ears. There was the sound again. She addressed herself to the voice, "If you can help, I have heard you!" She paid very careful attention to the voice and traced it as coming from where her dear child was. There! There was the angel of the Lord of the worlds! He was the chief of them, Jibril عليه السلام. He was jabbing into the earth with his heel. That was the point of the Zamzam and suddenly water sprouted out from it. The water that she seeked at the mountains, sprang up below the feet of her infant by the command of the Gracious Lord.

Imagine the happiness and joy of the mother who now saw the light of her life rescued from the claws of death and grow strong. As if by a reflex action she began to scoop the water and thought about storing it. She made out a sort of a pond with her hands so that water may not escape. If she had let it alone then Zamzam would have been a spring about which the Prophet ﷺ has said, "May Allah have mercy on the mother of Isma'il! If she had let the Zamzam alone (and not made a pond), it would have run as a spring."

Thus, Allah blessed her with life-giving water and she could again suckle her child-whose hunger was satiated and thirst quenched. Jibril عليه السلام said, "Do not fear that you would be destroyed!" He gave her the glad tidings that the child and his father would construct the House of Allah and Allah would never let its dwellers perish.

Allah perfected His blessings on mother and son. In order that they may have company. We made people settle there. A caravan of the Bani Jurham passed from there and encamped in the outskirts of the valley of Makkah. They observed a species of bird which had the habit of being near water and if they were merely passing by then these birds would not stop there, but they continued to fly overhead. However, these people were acquainted with the area and knew that there was no water here and no habitation. They sent a scout to investigate and he reported back that he had found a woman and an

infant near water.

Hence, all of them went there and observed the bubbling water. They were very happy and sought permission of the mother of Isma'il to stay there. She consented to their stay but made it conditional that they will not have any right over water. They agreed to her condition and called their families too to stay with them for they were nomadic people who took up temporary residence at a fertile spot before proceeding to a new destination.

Isma'il عليه السّلام grew up in this situation. He was very handsome and graceful. He was active and good-mannered. His endearing nature compelled his neighbours to give him one of their girls in marriage to him.

Meanwhile, his mother died. she had no more fear or worry on account of her dear child and death came to her, death which is the end of all life.

Ibrahim عليه السّلام who had been away from them for a long time came to see his wife and child. He did not find Isma'il at home. He had gone to seek livelihood for his family. His wife complained to Ibrahim عليه السّلام about their hardship and when he took leave of her, he asked her to tell her husband to change the threshold of his gate. (This was a figurative way of asking him to divorce his wife, and get himself another wife, because she was not a contended woman while wives of Prophets should show contentment.) She was unaware that he was Isma'il's father and was leaving a message to him through her to divorce her. She conveyed the message to Isma'il عليه السّلام who understood it and divorced her.

When Ibrahim عليه السّلام came a second time he found another woman in his son's house and she was of an utterly different temperament. In spite of facing difficult times, she was grateful and content. So, he left message that she should be retained. He had observed that she was worth being a Prophet's wife. He prayed for their well-being before departing from there.

It is worth remembering that Ibrahim عليه السّلام asked what they ate. He was told that they ate meat and water. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has said that they did not have grain or cereals for if they had it, she would have mentioned that and Ibrahim عليه السّلام would have blessed that too.

It is amazing, therefore, that the people of Makkah who are children of Isma'il عليه السّلام live on water and meat alone. They use cereal and grain very little and much use of meat is not harmful to them while it would be damaging to any other people to continuously eat meat.

When Sayyidina Ibrahim عليه السّلام came a third time, he met his son. He was sharpening the arrows. Father and son met after a long time and they treated each other as they should have. They saluted and embraced each other and shook hands. They enquired after each other. Sayyidina Ibrahim عليه السّلام then informed his obedient son that Allah had commanded him to build the *Ka'bah* and that Isma'il should help him. The obedient son lost no time in agreeing to follow the command of Allah. Thus, both of them took up the task of building the House on completion of which they invoked the blessings of Allah:

رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ ○

{Our Lord! Accept from us (this service). You, indeed You, are the Hearer, the Knower.} (Al-Baqarah, 2:127)

Lessons and Messages

The *Hadith* of this story is a source of knowledge and realities. If the Prophet ﷺ had not narrated these facts to us, we did not have any other means to know how the *Ka'bah* was built and other facts connected with it. The Qur'an has spoken only of the basic points while the Messenger of Allah ﷺ has related the details.

1. The first thing we learn is that Sayyidina Ibrahim عليه السّلام obeyed the command of Allah promptly without demur although it seemed that he would face difficulty and loss on obeying the command. Also, it seemed unintelligible to leave wife and child alone in wilderness absolutely helpless. But, the behaviour of Sayyidina Ibrahim عليه السّلام showed that Islam implies submission to the commands of Allah. There is no question of asking for the wisdom behind the command, or of procrastinating until the wisdom is understood. It is the demand of the command that compliance should follow without the least bit of unwillingness or hesitation.

Accordingly, he had also jumped into the fire without waver. He

did not stop to ask his intellect what was to be done.

Submission and prompt obedience is Islam. That is what worship and adoration demands. No matter how difficult, harmful or unintelligible the command of Allah be, it is not worthy of a slave to ask why or seek wisdom behind it or weigh it with intellect.

Hence, it is imperative for a worshipper that he should not dilly-dally but he should execute the command of Allah forthwith.

2. Often man thinks that an action is unpleasant and disadvantageous to him but, in reality, there is goodness and advantage concealed in it for him. It looked foolish and an unpleasant conduct to leave one's family members all alone in a desolate place. But, many blessings were concealed in the action not only for Ibrahim عليه السلام and his family but also for all mankind. This is very clear today.

Every Muslim should remember this. Anything happening with Allah's will and consent may seem difficult and damaging to them but finally their consequences are advantageous though hidden in them. for instance, someone has booked 9 seats for himself by a flight and makes all preparation to board the plane but somehow misses the flight. This is a very disgusting situation, but he may learn later that the plane he missed crashed and the passengers perished. Obviously, the loss of missing the flight was offset by the saving of life. The Qur'an has said:

عَسٰٓى اَنْ تَكْرَهُوْا شَيْئًا وَّهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَعَسٰٓى اَنْ تُحِبُّوْا شَيْئًا وَّهُوَ شَرٌّ لَّكُمْ ۝

{It may be that you abhor a thing, while it is good for you, and it may be that you love a thing, while it is bad for you.}
(Al-Baqarah,2:216)

3. This story also tells us that to obey the command of Allah does not preclude us, from seeking means. Rather, man must as far as possible seek means and instruments. Sayyidah Hajirah عليها السلام did not give up when she did not find water but she adopted all means within her power to seek water for her child and herself.

4. A father must take care of his children's worldly life besides their religious matters. Sayyidina Ibrahim عليه السلام first took care of the religious upbringing of his son and then he also cared for his material life and livelihood. He enquired after him and prayed for

abundance and blessings in his livelihood. When he had left them alone even then he invoked blessings in their sustenance.

5. We also learn from the *Hadith* that Sayyidina Isma'il عليه السّلام was an adept archer for he was arranging his bows and arrows when Ibrahim عليه السّلام met him. This is what prompted the Prophet ﷺ to tell his Companions رضى الله عنهم once:

إرموا بنى إسماعيل فإن اباكم كان راميا

["O Bani Isma'il! Practice archery because your father (Isma'il) was an archer."] (Bukhari)

6. The *Hadith* also teaches us that the men of God and the righteous and their families must show patience and gratitude and be content in every situation. They must not complain in difficult times. The first wife of Sayyidina Isma'il عليه السّلام had a complaining nature and Sayyidina Ibrahim عليه السّلام asked him to divorce her.

The Fifth Story

Sayyidina Ibrahim عليه السّلام and Sayyidah Sarah عليها السّلام & Cruel King

Introductory Words

The experience that we are going to relate now shows how Allah protects His slaves from the adversity of their enemies. He protected Sayyidah Sarah عليها السّلام from the mischief of a tyrant when he had evil designs against this wife of a noble Prophet. This story shows how Allah helps those people who have no one to help them. Allah always protects those of His slaves who are near to Him and, therefore, dear, and He always debases their enemies.

روى البخاري في صحيحه: عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رضى الله عنه قَالَ: قَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ: هَاجَرَ إِبْرَاهِيْمُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلام بِسَارَةَ، فَدَخَلَ بِهَا قَرْيَةً فِيْهَا مَلِكٌ مِّنَ الْمُلُوكِ، أَوْ جَبَّارٌ مِّنَ الْجَبَابِرَةِ، فَقِيْلَ: دَخَلَ إِبْرَاهِيْمُ بِامْرَأَةٍ هِيَ مِنْ أَحْسَنِ النِّسَاءِ، فَأَرْسَلَ إِلَيْهِ: أَنْ يَّا إِبْرَاهِيْمُ، مَنْ هَذِهِ الَّتِيْ مَعَكَ؟ قَالَ: أُخْتِيْ، ثُمَّ رَجَعَ إِلَيْهَا، فَقَالَ لا تُكَذِّبِيْ حَدِيْثِيْ فَإِنِّيْ أَخْبَرْتُهُمْ أَنَّكِ أُخْتِيْ، وَاللهِ إِنْ عَلَى الأَرْضِ مُؤْمِنٌ غَيْرِىْ وَغَيْرُكِ، فَأَرْسَلَ بِهَا إِلَيْهِ فَقَامَ إِلَيْهَا، فَقَامَتْ تَوَضَّأُ وَتُصَلِّيْ، فَقَالَتِ: اللّٰهُمَّ إِنْ كُنْتُ آمَنْتُ بِكَ وَبِرَسُوْلِكَ، وَأَحْصَنْتُ فَرْجِيْ إِلا عَلَى زَوْجِيْ، فَلا تُسَلِّطْ عَلَيَّ الْكَافِرَ، فَغُطَّ حَتّٰى رَكَضَ بِرِجْلِهِ.

قَالَ الأَعْرَجُ: قَالَ: أَبُوْ سَلَمَةَ بْنُ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمٰنِ: إِنَّ أَبَا هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَتِ: اللّٰهُمَّ إِنْ يَمُتْ يُقَالُ: هِيْ قَتَلَتْهُ، فَأُرْسِلَ، ثُمَّ قَامَ إِلَيْهَا، فَقَامَتْ تَوَضَّأُ

تُصَلِّيْ، وَتَقُوْلُ: اللّٰهُمَّ إِنْ كُنْتُ آمَنْتُ بِكَ وَبِرَسُوْلِكَ، وَأَحْصَنْتُ فَرْجِيْ إِلا عَلَى زَوْجِيْ، فَلا تُسَلِّطُ عَلَيَّ هَذَا الْكَافِرَ، فَغُطَّ حَتّٰى رَكَضَ بِرِجْلِهِ.

قَالَ عَبْدُ الرَّحْمٰنِ: قَالَ أَبُوْ سَلَمَةَ: قَالَ أَبُوهُرَيْرَةَ: فَقَالَتِ: اللّٰهُمَّ إِنْ يَّمُتْ فَيُقَالُ: هِيَ قَتَلَتْهُ، فَأُرْسِلَ فِي الثَّانِيةِ أَوْ فِيْ الثَّالِثَةِ، فَقَالَ: وَاللّٰه مَا أَرْسَلْتُمْ إِلَيَّ إِلا شَيْطَانَا، ارْجِعُوْهَا إِلَى إِبْرَاهِيْمَ، وَأَعْطُوْهَا آجَرَ، فَرَجَعَتْ إِلَى إِبْرَاهِيْمَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلام، فَقَالَتْ: أَشَعَرْتَ أَنَّ اللّٰه كَبَتَ الْكَافِرَ، وَ أَخَدَمَ وَلِيْدَةً.

وَفِيْ رِوَايَةِ أخرٰى فِيْ صَحِيْح البُخَارِيْ: عَنْ أَبِيْ هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: لَمْ يَكْذِبْ إِبْرَاهِيْمُ عَلَيْهِ السَّلام إِلا ثَلاثَ كَذَبَاتٍ: ثِنْتَيْنِ مِنْهُنَّ فِيْ ذَاتِ اللّٰهِ عزّوجَلّ، قَوْلُهُ (إِنِّيْ سَقِيمْ-الصّافات:٩٨) وَقَوْلُهُ (بَلْ فَعَلَهُ كَبِيْرُهُمْ هَذَا الأنبياء:٦٣)، وَقَالَ: بَيْنَا هُوَ ذَاتَ يَوْمٍ وَّسَارَةُ إِذْ أَتي عَلَى جَبَّارٍ مِّنَ الْجَبَابِرَةِ، فَقِيْلَ لَهُ: إِنَّ هَاهُنَا رَجُلا مَعَهُ امْرَأَةٌ مِنْ أَحْسَنِ النَّاسِ، فَأَرْسَلَ إِلَيْهِ فَسَأَلَهُ عَنْهَا، فَقَالَ: مَنْ هَذِهِ؟ قَالَ: أُخْتِيْ. فَأَتي سَارَةَ قَالَ: يَا سَارَةُ لَيْسَ عَلَى وَجْهِ الأَرْضِ مُؤْمِنٌ غَيْرِيْ وَغَيْرَكِ، وَإِنَّ هَذَا سَأَلَنِي فَأَخْبَرْتُهُ عَنْكِ أَنَّكِ أُخْتِيْ، فَلا تُكَذِّبِنِيْ. فَأَرْسَلَ إِلَيْهَا، فَلَمَّادَخَلَتْ عَلَيْهِ ذَهَبَ يَتَنَاوَلُهَا بِيَدِهِ فَأُخِذَ فَقَالَ ادْعِي اللّٰهِ لِيْ وَلَا أَضُرُّكِ فَدَعَتِ اللّٰه فَأُطْلِقَ ثُمَّ تَنَاوَلَهَا الثَّانِيَةَ فَأُخِذَ مِثْلَهَا أَوْ أَشَدَّ، فَقَالَ: ادْعِي اللّٰه لِيْ وَلا أَضُرُّكِ، فَدَعَتْ فَأُطْلِقَ، فَدَعَا بَعْضَ حَجَبَتِهِ فَقَالَ: إِنَّكُمْ لَمْ تَأتُوْنِيْبِإِنْسَانٍ، إِنَّمَاأَتَيْتُمُوْنِيْ بِشَيْطَانٍ، فَأَخْدَمَهَا هَاجَرَ، فَأَتَتْهُ وَهُوَ قَائِمٌ يُّصَلِّيْ، فَأَوْمَأَ بِيَدِهِ، مَهْيَمْ؟ قَالَتْ رَدَّ اللّٰه كَيْدَالْكَافِرِ أَوِ الْفَاجِرِ فِيْ نَحْرِهِ، وَأَخْدَمَ هَاجَرَ.

قَالَ أَبُـوْ هُرَيْرَةَ: تِلْكَ أُمُّكُمْ يَا بَنِيْ مَاءِ السَّمَاءِ.

Translation

[It is narrated by Abu Hurayrah رضی الله عنه that the Prophet ﷺ said: Ibrahim emigrated with Sarah and entered a village

where there was a king amongst the kings, or a tyrant amongst the tyrants. He was told that Ibrahim had come (and was) accompanied by a woman who was one of the most charming women. So, the king sent for Ibrahim and asked "O Ibrahim! Who is this lady with you?" Ibrahim replied, "She is my sister." Then Ibrahim returned to her and said, "Do not contradict my statement for I have informed them that you are my sister. By Allah, there are no true believers on earth besides you and I." (So, you are my believing sister in religion.) Then Ibrahim sent her to the king. When the king got to her, she got up and performed ablution, offered *as-Salah* (prayer) and made the supplication, "O Allah, if I have believed in You and Your Messenger, and have abstained except from my husband then do not let this disbeliever overpower me." On that the king fell down unconscious and started moving his legs. (The narrator then continues:) She supplicated Allah, "O Allah, if he should die, the people will say that I have killed him." The king regained power and again proceeded towards her but she got up again performed ablution offered *as-Salah* and made the supplication, "O Allah, if I have believed in You and Your Messenger and kept my private parts safe from all except my husband then do not let this disbeliever get the better of me." The king again fell down unconscious and began moving his legs. (The narrators continue:)

She said, "O Allah, if he should die, the people will say that I have killed him." The king got two or three such attacks, and after recovering from the last, he said, "By Allah! You have sent a Satan to me. Take her to Ibrahim, and give her Hajirah." So, she came back to Ibrahim and said, "Allah humiliated the disbeliever, and gave us a slave-girl for service."]

(Bukhari, *Hadith* #2217)

In another version also in Sahih Bukhari, Sayyidina Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه has said:

[Ibrahim did not tell a lie except on three occasions. Twice for the sake of Allah when he said, "I am sick", (as-Saffat, verse 98) and "I have not done it but the big idol has done it." (al-Ambiya, verse 63)

The third (was while) Ibrahim and Sarah were going (on a journey) and they passed by the territory of a tyrant amongst the tyrants. Someone said to the tyrant, "This man is accompanied by a very charming lady." So he sent for Ibrahim and asked him about Sarah saying, "Who is the lady (with you)?" Ibrahim said, "My sister." Then he returned and said to Sarah, "O Sarah! There are no believers on the surface of the earth except you and I. This man asked me about you and I have told him that you are my sister, so do not contradict me."

The tyrant then called Sarah and when she went to him, he tried to take hold of her with his hand, but he was confounded. He asked Sarah to pray for him and he would not harm her. So, she asked Allah to cure him and he was cured. He tried to take hold of her for the second time but (his hand got stiffer than before and) was more confounded. He again requested Sarah. "Pray to Allah for me and I will not harm you." Sarah asked Allah again and he became cured. He then called one of his guards and said, "You have not brought to me a human being but you have brought a devil." The tyrant then gave Sarah, Hajirah as a girl-servant. Sarah came back to Ibrahim while he was offering *as-Salah* (prayer). Ibrahim gesturing with his hand asked, "What has happened?" She replied, "Allah has foiled the evil plot of the infidel, and gave me Hajirah for service."

Abu Hurayrah then said: That was your mother, O *Bani Ma'as-Sama*. (Children of the water of the sky)]

(Bukhari *Hadith* # 3358 / Muslim, Book of Excellence of Ibrahim 4/1840)

The Prophets are Innocent of All Sins Including Lying

1. The *Hadith* says: Sayyidina Ibrahim عليه السّلام did not tell a lie except on three occasions.

What does the Arabic word *Kaziba* (lie) mean here? It is obvious that the word is not used in its true sense because it is impossible that the Holy Prophets عليهم السّلام commit any kind of sin. The Ulama agree that the Prophets are innocent.

In fact, the word is used here in relation to the listener and one who is addressed. The listener understands another meaning in what

the speaker says although he does not mean that. This is called توریه (*tawriyah*) and it is an allusion, hint double entendre or a pun (play upon words). The responsibility that Allah has placed on the Prophets regarding the conveying of the message leaves no possibility for telling lies even to a very small degree.

As far as affairs of the world are concerned, the authorities, both earlier and subsequent, hold possibility in either way on telling lies by the Prophets عليهم السلام but the more correct view is that they are innocent and have never told lies.

Qadi Ayyad Maliki has said about this subject:

"The correct point is that as far as conveying or propagation is concerned (what is necessary to be conveyed to the people), it is even beyond imagination (that they would lie) though we may or may not believe in the possibility of their lying for the inferior..... because the office of prophethood is much above such things. If we leave open the possibility of Prophets telling lies then it would question their sayings, trustworthiness and reliability."

Anyway, the word *Kazaba* here, does not mean *he lied.* Whatever Sayyidina Ibrahim عليه السلام said was a fact and true and his saying could be interpreted in two ways. The addressee took the nearest and common meaning while the Prophet had the rare meaning in mind. His speech was figurative for Sayyidina Ibrahim, the friend of Allah, was far above speaking lies.

2. The last sentence spoken by Sayyidina Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه in the *Hadith* is: "That (Hajirah) was your mother, *O Bani Ma' as-Sama* (Θ, children of the water of the sky)."

Imam Nawawi has said about the meaning of this phrase:

"Many scholars believe the *Bani Ma' as-Sama* refers to Arabs because their descent is direct and pure. They are not a mixed race. They are as free of mixing with others as rain water from the sky is free of impurities of the world."

It is also said that it refers to the Ansar because their ancestor Aamir bin Harithah bin Umraw al-Qays was called *Ma as-Sama* (water of the sky). But Allah knows best.

Explanation

When Ibrahim عليه السلام emigrated from his homeland, Sayyidah Sarah عليها السلام was with him. Earlier, his people had plunged him into the fire but it had turned into a cool resort for him at the command of Allah. After that, he emigrated from there and kept setting camps at distant places and, obviously, he found no one to help him in strnage lands. In such conditions, cruel and oppressing people often have a wicked eye on immigrants and travellers and Sayyidina Ibrahim عليه السلام also encountered a tyrant intoxicated with power and authority. He learnt that Ibrahim was in his territory with a beautiful woman. In those days, these tyrants arrested the husband of a woman whom they liked to enjoy but if she was accompanied with a father or brother or she was unmarried, they did not bother her.

This is why Ibrahim عليه السلام said that she was his sister. However, in spite of that the tyrant had evil designs on her. Ibrahim عليه السلام sent her to the tyrant because as a Prophet he was confident that Allah would not let her suffer. The Prophets عليهم السلام are the most sacred and pure natured of all people and Allah chooses pure women for them. While it is possible that a Prophet's wife may be a disbeliever but she cannot be an immoral woman. Wives of Prophets are always pure and modest.

Prophet Ibrahim عليه السلام had full faith in Allah and knew that Sayyidah Sarah عليها السلام would not come to harm at the hands of the evil king. So, he sent her to the king but informed her that he had told him that she was his sister–and this saying was a play upon words, *tawriyah*.

Tawriyah is a speech that may be interpreted in two ways. The addressee understands in a way that is contrary to what the speaker intends. It is proper to do so especially if one does it to preserve oneself from a tyrant or from his mischief. Such a course of action is not the same as telling lies.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ referred to it as a lie because it seemed such to the listeners.

So, Sayyidina Ibrahim عليه السلام said to Sayyidah Sarah عليها السلام that he had told him that she was his sister. He added, "The fact is that there is no one besides you and I on earth who is a believer. So, you are my sister in religion." Allah has said:

إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ إِخْوَةٌ٥

{The believers are but brethren} (Al-Hujurat, 49: 11)

The Prophet ﷺ has said that Ibrahim عليه السّلام lied three times. The Qur'an has reffered to it at two places.

In one verse, Ibrahim عليه السّلام is supposed to have said إِنِّي سَقِيْم {I am unwell}.[1] Here, Ibrahim عليه السّلام had resorted to *tawriyah* to save himself from joining in a sinful activity when his people invited him to participate in their festival where idols were worshipped. He meant, "I am upset and sad because of your idol-worship." That is what the word سقيم (*saqeem*) also means.

The second time, when he was all alone and had the opportunity, he smashed all the idols and placed the axe in the neck of the biggest of them whom he had spared. Later, when he was asked by his people about it, he said:

بَلْ فَعَلَهُ كَبِيْرُهُمْ هٰذَاه

{Nay he has done it–this, the big one of them...} (Al-Anbiya, 21:63)

Obviously, this thing was contrary to fact but Sayyidina Ibrahim عليه السّلام spoke in this manner to present the people with an argument. In fact, they too conceded that the idol could not speak and Ibrahim عليه السّلام was not talking sense. He took up the argument with their words and said that it was a pity that in spite of knowing all that they continued to worship the idols who neither spoke nor heard, neither benefited anyone nor harmed him.

In short, all these three speeches were contrary to facts but they were not lies. There is a maxim:

حسنات الأبرار سيئات المقربين٥

"The piety of the pious are the evil of the near ones."

If a common man does anything against the recommended then he is not taken to task or blamed but the Prophet عليهم السّلام are slaves of Allah who are near to Him so if they do anything against a better course then they are cautioned and reprimanded. Accordingly we find in a *Hadith* that on the Day of Resurrection all the creatures will be worried and distressed because of the severity of the occasion. So, they will go to different Prophets imploring them to recommend to Allah that He ease the severity and commence the reckoning. But,

[1] As-Saffat, 37: 89.

all the Prophets عليهم السّلام will recall that they had gone against the better sometime or other and will repent and seek forgiveness for that, and they will regret their inability to recommend. Sayyidina Ibrahim عليه السّلام, too, will express helplessness in the matter and recall these three occasions which he will count as grave sins and seek forgiveness for that.

Returning to the episode, Sayyidina Ibrahim عليه السّلام sent Sayyidah Sarah عليها السّلام to the tyrant and himself stood up in prayer before Allah–a meeting with, and a petition to, his Lord. Allah accepted his supplication and helped Sayyidah Sarah عليها السّلام although there was no visible means of help. She too had made suplications to Allah in her helpless situation, and He protected her and she maintained her chastity. Her supplication was, "O Allah, if I am a believer in You and Your Messenger, and have preserved my chastity, then let not the disbeliever harm me."

When she was there, he extended his hand towards her with evil designs. The secret, unseen powers of nature seized him and made him a cripple. Sayyidah Sarah worried that if the cruel man died then she would be blamed for killing him and he too pleaded with her that he would cause her no harm if she beseeched Allah to restore him to health.

She prayed to Allah accordingly and he was cured, but he reverted to his devilish designs. Once again, unseen forces of nature seized him and he was seized more severely than before. Once again he implored Sayyidah Sarah عليها السّلام to pray to Allah, and she did, and he was restored to health.

This cruel man then summoned his couriers and guards and complained that they had brought a devil to him (for he thought that only a devil has secret powers). He ordered them to take her away and deliver her safely to Ibrahim and he gave her Hajirah as a slave-girl. She is the very Sayyidah Hajirah عليها السّلام who is the mother of Sayyidina Isma'il عليه السّلام for Sayyidah Sarah عليها السّلام had gifted her to her husband, Ibrahim عليه السّلام who married her. (we have spoken of this earlier.)

Imam Muslim has transmitted a *Hadith* of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

[You would soon conquer Egypt and that is the land of

al-qirat (the Egyptian currency was so-called). So, when you conquer it, treat its inhabitants well for they have blood-ties with you or have a relationship of marriage.][1]

This means that the Prophet ﷺ was among the descendants of Sayyidina Isma'il عليه السلام, the son of Sayyidah Hajirah عليها السلام. She was of Egyptian stock. She was the mother of the Prophet and the Arabs and he spoke in this vein.

Lessons and Messages

1. The most important thing this *Hadith* tells us is that the wives of Allah's Prophets and Messengers عليهم السلام are honourable and chaste and they are safe and protected from evil. If any evil person should try to harm them or harbours evil designs against them, Allah will not only fail him in his mischief but also punish him. The wives of the Prophets and Messengers remain unharmed because these people are the most sacred and pure section of mankind. So, their wives too are pure and chaste in conformity with Divine law:

اَلطَّيِّبَاتُ لِلطَّيِّبِيْنَ ○

{Good women are for good men}[2]

We have seen how Sayyidah Sarah عليها السلام was protected by the unseen Hand of Allah. The sinning tyrant, on the other hand, was punished.

2. We also learn from this *Hadith* that a believer must turn to Allah immediately when he is faced with trial. He must seek His help through prayer (*As-Salah*) as, indeed, Sayyidina Ibrahim عليه السلام and Sayyidah Sarah عليها السلام immediately stood up in prayer and made imploring supplications to Allah when they were seized with trial. As a result Allah helped them preserve their honour and chastity.

3. The story brings out a reality that in his practical life man is sometimes faced with a situation where he cannot do what he wishes to do. Rather, he has to submit to a great opposition and if he does not submit then he cannot protect himself or subdue the opposition. In such cases, rather than fight the opposition, he must place trust in the Powers of Allah and let matters be left to His will and it is not

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1 Muslim 6174, reported by Abi Zarr. 2 An-Nur, 24: 26.

against *Shari'ah* to bow down to opposition for the moment. Sayyidina Ibrahim عليه السّلام did not consider it reasonable to oppose the tyrant for he could not have, by himself, caused him any harm but he would have suffered himself. So, he put the affairs in the Hands of Allah. Lord of the worlds and made a heart-felt supplication to Him for He is the Most Superior Power Who prevents tyrants from being cruel and oppressive. And. He did. in fact. help them.

Many People consider that it is manly and courageous to oppose and fight rather than submit and bow down in such situations. Man is not always able to practice religion in every kind of situation and he cannot always live his life according to his liking and wish. In such situations when fighting the opposing power could be harmful, it is better to adopt a policy of peace and seek a better way for oneself.

The Truce of Hudaybiyah is an example in the life of the Messenger of Allah, Muhammad ﷺ. Sometimes it is more important to refrain from shedding blood.

It must be clear, however, that it does not imply that Muslims must surrender to the disbelievers or tyrants or always toe their line from fear of death or loss of property and wealth. Certainly never! Islam teaches us to live in honour and dignity and has prescribed *Jihad* for that very end. The door of *Jihad* is always open for Muslims against every tyrant and colonist who aims at suppressing Islam or playing with the honour of Muslims or attacks them or prevents them from living peacefully or refuses to accept Islam's supremacy and subjugation of evil. To live honourably a Muslim would cherish to die honourably and gain martyrdom.

The teaching of submission is applied when wisdom demands that course. We get many examples of that in the lives of the honourable Companions رضوان الله عليهم اجمعين and in events of battles and expeditions.

For example, there is the case of a number of Companions being taken captive by the enemy. The enemy king tried his best to get them to renounce Islam but those people were firm and did not give in. Having failed in all his attempts, he had a very large fire kindled in which a large vessel filled with oil was placed. When the oil

began to boil, he called their *amir* (the leader) and said to him, "If you renounce Islam, it is okay otherwise I would have you placed in the oil." The Companion did not yield.

The cruel king decided to put in more pressure. He asked for another of the Companions to be brought to him and ordered that he should be put in the fire. That man was cast into the burning oil and within moments he turned into ashes. The *amir* stood his ground and did not budge in the least, so the king directed his men to put him into the raging fire. As he was being taken to the fire, tears rolled down his eyes. The king had him brought back assuming that he was afraid of death and might give in. He said to him, "There is still time. You can save yourself from fire." The Companion said, "O, you think that tears have come to my eyes because I fear death. No! It is not so! I wept because I have only one life to give up in Allah's way. If I had a thousand, I would have given up them all, for this one would be lost in just a few moments."

Look at his sentiments!

This answer placed the king in a quandary. He wondered what sort of people those men were! They held death dear even when they were in the hold of death; the king thought about his people and himself, "We do not even love life to that extent as they love death."

The king decided, therefore, that instead of being put to death these people should be given some other punishment, something that would arouse their sense of modesty. He said, "I am willing to release you, if you kiss my head."

The *amir* thought about it for a little while and then said, "Yes! I will kiss your forehead on condition that you release all my companions too."

The king agreed to that condition; and this man kissed the king's forehead and got all his companions released from captivity.

When they reached home, Sayyidina Umar رضي الله عنه was informed of the entire episode and he was very happy with that. He praised this man's strength of belief and insight.

He was steadfast and bold. He used his insight and got all his men released. He could have fought against the king but that would have been disastrous as well as against wisdom. He showed steadfastness where that was called for; even the disbelieving king

was overawed by his firmness. When it was opportune that he use his foresight, he did that and got his companions released.

In fact, this is how every Muslim must conduct himself, showing firmness of faith and deep insight. Every Muslim must work to grasp on understanding of religion.

4. The fourth thing that the *Hadith* teaches us is that it is proper for a Muslim to accept a gift from an infidel or a tyrant (provided it does not compell him to waver in his belief). It was the devilish, cruel king who presented a slave-girl to Sayyidah Sarah عليها السّلام and she accepted the gift. Then, Sayyidina Ibrahim عليه السّلام confirmed her action. Then, she presented the slave-girl, Hajirah, to Sayyidina Ibrahim عليه السّلام who married her and she was to become the mother of Isma'il عليه السّلام.

5. When anyone receives a bounty or is rescued from a difficulty then he must not only express gratitude to Allah but also make the blessing known to others. It is known as *tahdeeth ni'mah* (publicity of blessing). When she was free from the tyrant king, Sayyidah Sarah عليها السّلام answered the question of Sayyidina Ibrahim عليه السّلام, "Allah has been merciful and the mischief of the disbeliever has rebounded on him and saved me from his wickedness."

The Sixth Story

The Story of Sayyidina Lut عليه السّلام

First Words

Sayyidina Lut عليه السّلام was one of the prominent determined Prophets. He was faced with a people who were most hard-hearted and extremely cruel. They had lost all natural and instinctive tendencies and they had become inhuman losing all sort of moral values. They refused to heed the repeated calls to guidance of the Prophet of Allah, and their savage behaviour was worse than what animals do. They were more brutal than brutes. Their unnatural detestable conduct was a blur on human history. Sayyidina Lut عليه السّلام tolerated them for a long period of time but when they transgressed beyond limit, the Creator of nature let lose His arm of punishment which was as severe as their crime demanded. They were eliminated from the face of earth.

روى الحاكم فِيْ مستدركه عن ابن عباس رضى اللّٰه عنهم، قَال: لَمَّاجَآءَ تْ رُسُلُ اللّٰه لُوْطاً ظَنَّ أَنَّهُمْ ضِيفَانٌ لَقُوة، فَأَدْنَاهُمْ حَتّٰى أَقْعَدَهُمْ قَرِيْباً، وَجَاءَ بِبنَاتِهِ وَهُنَّ ثَلاث، فَأَقْعَدَهُنَّ بَيْنَ ضِيْفَانِهِ وَبَيْنَ قَوْمِهِ، فَجَاءَ قَوْمُهُ يَهْرَعُوْنَ إِلَيْهِ، فَلَمَّا رَآهُمْ قَالَ: هٰؤُلاءِ بَنَاتِيْ هُنَّ أَطْهَرُ لَكُمْ فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَلا تُخزُونِ فِيْ ضَيْفِيْ (هود: ٧٨) قَالُوا: مَالَنَافِيْ بَنَاتِكَ مِنْ حَقٍّ وَّإِنَّكَ لَتَعْلَمُ مَا نُرِيْد (هود: ٧٩) قَال: لَوْ أَنَّ لِي بِكُمْ قُوَّةً أَوْ ءَاوِيَ إِلٰى رُكْنٍ شَدِيْدٍ. (هود: ٨٠)

فَالْتَفَتَ إِلَيْهِ جِبْرِيْلُ عَلَيهِ السَّلام فَقَالَ: إِنَّا رُسُلُ رَبِّكَ لَنْ يَّصِلُوا إِلَيْكَ (هود: ٨١) قَالَ: فَطَمَسَ أَعْيُنَهُمْ فَرَجَعُوْا وَرَاءَ هُمْ يَرْكَبُ بَعْضُهُمْ بَعْضاً، حَتّٰى خَرَجُوْا إِلى الَّذِيْنَ بِالْبَابِ، فَقَالُوْا: جِئْنَاكُمْ مِنْ عِنْدَ أَسْحَرَ النَّاسِ قَدْ طَمَسَ

أَبْصَارَنَا، فَانْطَلَقُوْا يَرْكَبُ بَعْضُهُمْ بَعْضاً، حَتّٰى دَخَلُوْا الْقَرْيَةِ، فَرُفِعَتْ فِيْ بَعْضِ اللَّيْلِ، حَتّٰى كَانَتْ بَيْنَ السَّمَآءِ وَالْارْض، حَتّٰى إِنَّهُمْ لَيَسْمَعُوْنَ أَصْوَاتَ الطَّيْرِ، فِيْ جَوّ السَّمَآءِ، ثُمَّ قُلِبَتْ فَخَرَجَتْ الأَفْكَةُ عَلَيْهِمْ فَمَنْ أَدْرَكَتْهُ الأَفْكَةُ قَتَلَتْهُ، وَمَنْ خَرَجَ اتَّبَعَتْهُ حَيْثُ كَانَ حَجَراً فَقَتَلَتْهُ.

قَالَ: فَارْتَحَلَ بِبَنَاتِهِ وَهُنَّ ثَلاث، حَتّٰى إِذَا بَلَغَ مَكَانَ كَذَا وَكَذَا مِنَ الشَّامِ فَمَاتَتْ ابْنَتُهُ الْكُبْرَى، فَخَرَجَتْ عِنْدَهَا عَيْنٌ يُقَالُ لَهَا الْوَرِيَّةَ، ثُمَّ انْطَلَقَ حَيْثُ شَآءَ اللّٰه أَنْ يَّبْلُغَ فَمَاتَتْ الصُّغْرَى، فَخَرَجَتْ عِنْدَهَا عَيْنٌ يُقَالُ لَهَا الرعزِيّة فَمَا بَقِي مِنْهُنَّ إِلاَّ الْوُسْطَى.

Translation

Hakim has transmitted in his *mustadrak* from Sayyidina Ibn Abbas رضى الله عنه. He has said:

[When the messengers of Allah (the angels) came to Lut عليه السّلام (in human form) he took them for guests who had come to meet him. He made them sit with him and when his three daughters came he made them sit between his guests and his people. His people came running to him unchecked. When he saw his people, (he recalled their nefarious habit and) he said, هٰؤُلاءِ بَنَاتِيْ هُنَّ اَطهَرُ لَكُمْ فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَلَا تُخزُون فِيْ ضَيْفِيْ "These are my daughters. They are (more) pure for you (than the guests, if you wish to marry them). Fear Allah and do not degrade me before my guests." (Hud, 11:78). They replied: مَالَنَافِيْ بَنَاتِكَ مِنْ حَقٍّ وَّإِنَّكَ لَتَعْلَمُ مَا نُرِيْد "Certainly you know that we have nothing to do with your daughters and you know well what we desire."(11:79).

So, Lut عليه السّلام said, لَوْ اَنَّ لِيْ بِكُمْ قُوَّةً اَوْ ءَاوِي إِلى رُكْنٍ شَدِيْدٍ "Would that I had power against you, or might have some strong support for refuge."(11:80)

Hearing all this, Jibril عليه السّلام (who was one of the guests in the form of handsome young men whom Lut عليه السّلام had not yet known as such) said:

"O Lut! We are messengers of your Lord. They shall not reach you."(11:81)

Then, (with Allah's command) Jibril عليه السّلام battered their

eyes and all of them crashed into one another and, one over the other, they turned back until they were at the door, saying to those who were there, "We have come to you from the greatest sorcerer who has blinded us." They thus returned in the confusion to their homes.

Then, in the middle of the night the whole settlement was raised up (with its people) and held suspended between the sky and earth. Its people could hear the birds in the atmosphere. Then, (from as much height) it was upturned over earth. A strong wind from the wrong side killed whoever was in its path but those who were out of its reach had stones falling on them.

Sayyidina Lut عليه السّلام had meanwhile, left the settlement with his three daughters. When he reached an unspecified place in Syria, his eldest daughter died, and at that spot a spring called *Al-Wariyah* began to flow.

He kept going forward as long as Allah Willed. His youngest daughter died and the spring *Ar-Ra'ziyah* sprouted from there. Only the second of the three remained.]

(Hakim-al-Mustadrak 2/375)

Explanation

The story of Sayyidina Lut عليه السّلام is found in the Qur'an in its different portions, in brief at some places and in detail at other places. It is narrated in *Surah Hud* in some detail. However, this *Hadith* tells us some of the things that are not found in the Qur'an.

We may summarise their story thus: The people of Sayyidina Lut عليه السّلام had lost sense of all moral values. They did not recognise the unity of Allah or the office of His Prophet and they committed many sins. However, the worst of sins that was a black spot in history and may even have shamed the devil was their abnormal sexual habit, homosexuality. They satisfied their sexual desires with young boys and children who had not yet grown hair. They had lost desire for women completely and this was the detestable habit of all of them.

Allah decreed that the earth should be purified of these wicked people and when that time came, He sent the angels to punish them. Jibril عليه السّلام came to Lut عليه السلام with other angels in the form of

young men. He did not recognise them initially and treated them as his guests hoping that his people did not learn of them for he knew their evil habit. But, what he had feared did transpire and his people forced entry into his house and each of them demanded that the young men should be handed over to him.

Sayyidina Lut عليه السلام tried to bring them to their senses. He told them that they should refrain from the abhorrent habit and if they had to satisfy their sexual appetite they could marry the daughters of the community. He pleaded with them that they should not let him down before his guests. Say what he may, they did not relent but persisted in their demand for the young men to be handed over to them for, they asserted, they had nothing to do with his daughters.

Sayyidina Lut عليه السلام exclaimed, "Would that I had strength to ward off your mischief or that I had a strong place where I may seek refuge." (He meant to say that if he had a strong backing, he would teach them a lesson). This was the moment when Sayyidina Lut عليه السلام involuntarily succumbed to human frailty and overlooked the hidden help of Allah, but this conduct is contrary to the better in the standards set for Prophets of Allah عليهم السلام. This is what the Prophet ﷺ referred to when he said:

يرحم الله لوطا لقد كان يأوى إلى ركن شديد

[May Allah have mercy on Lut. He sought refuge in a strong support, (although Allah's support is most reliable)."]
(Bukhari, Muslim, from Abu Hurayrah)

In one version, it says, "May Allah forgive...."

Allamah Usmani has observed in his exegesis that every Prophet who came after Sayyidina Lut عليه السلام belonged to a strong party or tribe. (*Tafsir Usmani, Surah Hud*)

The angels comforted Lut عليه السلام saying, "O Lut! We are the angels of your Lord and these people will never make it to you."

The Tafsir Mazhari comments:

"Jibril عليه السلام then asked for his Lord's permission to release punishment on them and he got it. At that, he resumed his original form and spread his wings. He had a pearl necklace on him, shining teeth, bright forehead, curly hair of snow-white colour both feet green.

He then hit the people with one of his wings and they were

blinded. They rushed back saying, 'Run away, Lut has the greatest magician of the world at his house. And they have cast a spell on us.'

Then they turned to Sayyidina Lut عليه السّلام: Wait a bit! We will see you in the morning!

Lut عليه السّلام asked the angels about the appointed time of their punishment. They said: Morning! He urged them to hasten it, but they retorted: Is morning not near?" (Mazhari, 6/72)

The angels directed Lut عليه السّلام to leave the place in the last part of the night with his family. None of them should turn back to see and he should not take his wife along for she was inclined towards the people and would share their punishment.

There are two versions about what this meant:

1) She went alongwith Lut عليه السّلام but although they were commanded not to look back while departing from the place yet she turned to look back at her people. She saw them being punished and exclaimed, "O, my people!" Hardly had she said those words when she was detained and subjected to the same punishment.

2) Lut عليه السّلام did not take her along at all. She remained with the people.

Nevertheless, she was punished. As morning came, Allah commanded His angels to unleash punishment on them and all of them were wiped out of the face of earth.

جَعَلْنَا عَالِيَهَا سَافِلَهَا وَأَمْطَرْنَا عَلَيْهَا حِجَارَةً مِّنْ سِجِّيلٍ مَّنضُودٍ ۝ مُّسَوَّمَةً عِندَ رَبِّكَ ۝

{We turned the upside thereof downward, and rained on it stones of baked clay, one after another, marked from your Lord.} (Hud, 11:82, 83)

According to Baghawi they comprised of five colonies. Jibril عليه السّلام placed one of his wings below them and raised them high and they, on the top, heard the cock crowing and the dog barking. They were all asleep. Their vessels did not vibrate and none of them was awakened. (Mazhari, 6/74)

Once he had raised them up. Jibril عليه السّلام turned them upside down and hurled them down on the earth. He followed that with a shower of stones and it continued for some time. Each of the stones was marked. Everyone of them perished and none survived. They

numbered about four hundred thousand people. Their colonies are termed in the terminology of Qur'an as مؤتفكات (*mu'tafikat*), *the upturned.*

Lessons and Messages

1. The Qur'an has narrated the story of Sayyidina Lut عليه السلام frequently and the exegetes have commented on the historical details of this episode. Nevertheless, the *Hadith* on which our account is based reveals certain aspects which the Qur'an does not tell us, for example:

i) Jibril عليه السلام raised the entire people and settlement high up and suspended them in mid-air so that they could even hear the heavenly birds.

ii) Lut عليه السلام had three daughters who accompanied him when he was going away from the place. (The Qur'an merely mentions his daughters.)

The eldest of them died in Syria and Allah caused a spring to flow at the spot of her death. The spring is called *Al- Wariyah*. The youngest died further down in his journey and Allah caused the spring *Ar-Ra'ziyah* to flow at the spot of her death. Only one of her three daughters survived when he had reached his destination.

An Important Point

Torah was revealed to Sayyidinah Musa عليه السلام but subsequently the Jews made many changes in it. None of its copies today is the original. May Allah punish them, they have not spared the honourable Prophets عليهم السلام too from suggesting changes in their life accounts. But, Allah has His Own ways.

The Book revealed to the last of the Prophets is safe from changes. Allah has narrated herein the accounts of the lives of His Prophets and the interpolations of the Jews are very clearly pointed out.

They have also introduced their fables in the account of Lut's عليه السلام life. They have changed the Torah to include a very wicked and mischievous idea about Lut عليه السلام. They have said that he had two daughters with whom he left his homeland. When they took up residence at a cave in a mountain near *Su'ar* (Zoar), his daughters

remarked that their father did not have a male offspring and his line of descent would cease with him. So they intoxicated him with wine for two nights–may Allah forbid us this thought–and one of them slept with him the first of these nights while he had lost all consciousness. The second girl slept with him on the next night. Each of them conceived and they both had male offsprings. The descendants of the first are called *Muaameen* (Moabites) and of the second *Amumeen* (Ammonites). (Genesis, 19:30-31)

The Qur'an and the *Hadith* have disclosed the falsehood of the fabricated Torah. It is an ugly slander on a sacred Prophet of Allah and the cruel people have gone to extremes in telling lies and blaming the men of Allah. By Allah, the sacred Prophet is free from immodest behaviour whether open or concealed. All his life, he fought against immodest conduct and saw his people being subjected to punishment. How could he commit such an immoral act when Allah, the Great and Majestic, protects His sacred slaves? In the same way, his sacred and pure daughters were free from immorality and it was because of their piety that Allah had commanded them to move out of the punished settelement with their father.

Certainly, it is the imagination of dirty minds that has fabricated such tales about the sacred men. It is falsehood and lie. The Qur'anic terminology calls that *muftarayat* مفتريات. The *Hadith* has clearly uncovered the falsehood of the Jews.

2. The second message that the *Hadith* gives us is that when Allah decides to punish a people, He commands his pious slaves to move away from there. This is what He asked Lut عليه السّلام and his family to do when the punishment was about to be given to his wicked people.

3. Immodesty and sexual depravity is a very terrible sign of a people being led to social downfall. It is the last point from which downfall sets in. Many people have been punished for their crimes and have been eliminated from the face of earth but the punishment meted out to the people of Lut عليه السّلام was the severest. There is no example of anyone being punished as severely as they were. The reason is obvious: immodesty, the worst of sins.

It is not painful that today the people who read these

lesson-giving stories in the Qur'an and *Hadith* have themselves taken to this worst of sins which brought grave punishment to ancient people. The Muslim youth are racing towards way wardness and immoral behaviour. May Allah protect all Muslims from that. *Aameen!*

The Seventh Story

The Conversation Between Sayyidina Aadam عليه السّلام & Sayyidina Musa عليه السّلام

Introductory Words

We could never have known the story we are about to relate except through Divine revelation. However, there is no mention of it in the *wahy matloo* (the Holy Qur'an). We have learnt of it from the chief of Prophets and Messengers, Muhammad RaṣulAllah ﷺ on whom be the best of benedictions. Further, there is no witness to testify to this incident so there is no other way we may learn of it.

Sayyidina Aadam عليه السّلام and Sayyidina Musa عليه السّلام are both among the pre-eminent Prophets of Allah, the Exalted. The former is the father of mankind and the latter is *Kaleem Allah* (one who had the distinction of having conversation with Allah). The dialogue that took place between the two came to our knowledge through the Prophet ﷺ. Where did they meet and have the conversation, and when and how? These are questions whose answers the *Hadith* does not provide us and we cannot know. Nevertheless, we believe firmly that their meeting did take place because the truthful Prophet has told us so, about whom, the Qur'an has said:

مَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوٰى إِنْ هُوَ إِلَّا وَحْيٌ يُّوْحٰىo

{Nor does he speak out of (his own) desire. This (Qur'an is naught but a revelation revealed.} (An-Najm, 53:3–4)

روى الْبُخَارِى وَمُسْلِم فِيْ صَحِيحَيهِمَا عَنْ أَبِيْ هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُ قَال: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللّٰهِ ﷺ: احْتَجَّ آدَمُ وَمُوْسٰى عَلَيْهِمَا السَّلام عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمَا، فَحَجَّ آدَمُ مُوْسٰى، قَالَ مُوْسَى: أَنْتَ آدَمُ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَكَ اللّٰه بِيَدِهِ، وَنَفَخَ فِيْكَ

مِنْ رُوْحِهِ، وَأَسْجَدَ لَكَ مَلائِكَتَهُ، وَأَسْكَنَكَ فِيْ جَنَّتِهِ، ثُمَّ أَهْبَطْتَ النَّاسَ بِخَطِيْئَتِكَ إِلَى الأَرْضِ؟

فَقَالَ آدَمُ: أَنْتَ مُوْسٰى الَّذِيْ اصْطَفَاكَ اللّٰه بِرِسَالَتِهِ وَبِكَلامِهِ، وَأَعْطَاكَ الأَلْوَاحَ فِيْهَا تِبْيَانُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ، وَقَرَّبَكَ نَجِيًّا، فَبِكَمْ وَجَدْتَ اللّٰه كَتَبَ التَّوْرَاةَ قَبْلَ أَنْ أُخْلَقَ؟ قَالَ مُوْسَى بِأَرْبَعِيْنَ عَامًا.

قَالَ آدَمُ: فَهَلْ وَجَدْتَ فِيْهَا وَعَصٰى آدَمُ رَبَّهُ فَغَوٰى (طه: ١٢١)، قَالَ: نَعَمْ. قَالَ: أَفَتَلُوْمُنِي عَلَى أَنْ عَمِلْتُ عَمَلاً كَتَبَهُ اللّٰه عَلَيَّ أَنْ أَعْمَلَهُ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَّخْلُقَنِي بِأَرْبَعِيْنَ سَنَةً؟ قَالَ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ ﷺ: فَحَجَّ آدَمُ مُوْسَى. (وهٰذا السياق المسلم)

وَجَاءَ فِيْ رِوَايَةٍ عِنْدَ الْبُخَارِيْ: احْتَجَّ آدمُ وَمُوْسَى، فَقَالَ لَهُ مُوْسَى: أَنْتَ آدَمُ الَّذِيْ أَخْرَجَكَ خَطِيْئَتُكَ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ؟ فَقَالَ لَهُ آدَمُ: أَنْتَ مُوْسٰى الَّذِيْ اصْطَفَاكَ اللّٰهُ بِرِسَالَاتِهِ وَبِكَلَامِهِ ثُمَّ تَلُوْمُنِيْ عَلٰى أَمْرٍ قُدِّرَ عَلَيَّ قَبْلَ أَنْ أُخْلَقَ؟ فَقَالَ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ ﷺ فَحَجَّ آدَمُ مُوْسٰى، مَرَّتَيْنِ.

وَجَاءَ فِي الْبُخَارِي أَيْضًا إِحْتَجَّ آدَمُ وَمُوْسٰى فَقَالَ لَهُ مُوْسٰى: يٰآ آدَمُ أَنْتَ أَبُونَا خَيَّبْتَنَا، وَأَخْرَجْتَنَا مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ؟ قَالَ لَهُ آدَمُ: يَا مُوسَى، اصْطَفَاكَ اللّٰه بِكَلامِهِ، وَخَطَّ لَكَ بِيَدِهِ، أَتَلُومُنِيْ عَلَى أَمْرٍ قَدَّرَهُ اللّٰه عَلَيَّ قَبْلَ أَنْ يَّخْلُقَنِيْ بِأَرْبَعِيْنَ سَنَةً؟ فَحَجَّ آدَمُ مُوْسٰى، فَحَجَّ آدَمُ مُوسَى، ثَلاثًا.

Translation

[Abu Hyrayrah رضى الله عنه reported that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: There was an argument between Aadam and Musa عليهما السلام in the presence of their Lord. Aadam came the better of Musa. Musa said, "Are you that Aadam whom Allah created with His Hand and breathed into him His spirit, and commanded angels to fall in prostration before him and He made you live in Paradise with comfort and ease. Then you caused the people to get down to earth because of your lapse?"

Aadam said, "Are you that Musa whom Allah selected for His Messengership and for conversation with Him and conferred upon you the tablets in which everything was clearly explained and granted you the audience in order to have confidential talk with you. What is your opinion, how long Torah would have been written before I was created?" Musa said, "Forty years before."

Aadam said, "Did you not see these words, وَعَصَىٰ آدَمُ رَبَّهُ فَغَوَىٰ (Aadam disobeyed his Lord so he erred)?[1] Musa said, "Yes!" Thereupon, Aadam said, "Do you then blame me for an act which Allah had ordained for me forty years before He created me?"

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "This is how Aadam came the better of Musa.] (This is the version in Muslim # 1396)

The version in Bukhari is as follows:

[Aadam and Musa argued with each other. Musa said to Aadam, "You are Aadam whose mistake expelled you from Paradise." Aadam said to him, "You are Musa whom Allah selected as His Messenger and as the one to whom He spoke directly; yet you blame me for a thing which had already been preordained for me by Allah before my creation. Allah's Messenger ﷺ said twice, "So, Aadam overpowered Musa."] (Bukhari # 3409)

Another version in Bukhari is:

[Aadam and Musa argued with one another. Musa said to Aadam, "O Aadam! You are our father who disappointed us and turned us out of Paradise." Then Aadam said to him, "O Musa! Allah favoured you with His Talk (talked to you directly) and He wrote the Torah for you with His Own Hand. Do you blame me for an action which Allah had preordained for me forty years before my creation?" So Aadam confuted Musa, Aadam confuted Musa." The Prophet ﷺ repeated this statement three times.] (Bukhari # 6614)

Explanation

The life of this world is made up of hardships. Every human being born in this world has to face difficulty sometime or the other

[1] Ta Ha, 20: 121.

whether he is rich or poor, city-dweller or villager, woman or man. Everyone has to face different kinds of ordeals. This is life. The Qur'an says:

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنسَانَ فِي كَبَدٍ

{Certainly We created man to suffer hardship.} (Al-Balad, 90:4)

This goes on till the last breath before death. One could face problems related to earning livelihood, or, to family or residence. The morsel a man eats involves tremendous effort and labour to earn. For every morsel one man eats, several people put in a lot of effort. Indeed, it is nature's arrangement to put different people to different work so that man's mutual needs are fulfilled.

Every blessing that we enjoy in this world has behind it a story of hard work. Besides, there is illness in the process or unfavourable external circumstances, opposition from strangers or dissociation by close circle of companions. In short, he goes through the grinding process all his life.

Sayyidina Musa عليه السّلام is one of the pre-eminent, glorious and determined Prophets of Allah, the Great. He faced innumerable hardships in life. He had to fight Fir'awn and his army. He had to flee from Egypt to Madyan when a Coopt was killed (accidently) by him and at Madyan he had to graze the cattle of Shu'ayb عليه السّلام for eight or ten years. When he was made Prophet he had to face Fir'awn's wrath. Every now and then, the Bani Isra'il showed stubbornness, disobedience and hostility. He went through much hardship and difficulty.

Perhaps it was these difficulties that caused him to wonder if the basis of worldly problems lay in the dismissal of Sayyidina Aadam عليه السّلام from Paradise. "If he had not partaken from the forbidden tree, he would not have had to exit Paradise and land on earth. His children too would then have stayed in Paradise with him. They would not have had to go through the vicissitudes of the world."

Hence, when he met Sayyidina Aadam عليه السّلام, he reminded him that it was because of him that they had to face hardship in life. He told him that if he had not touched the forbidden tree and had been content with the other blessings in Paradise then he would not have been dismissed from Paradise.

Observation

It is worth remembering that Sayyidina Aadam عليه السلام was the first of mankind while Sayyidina Musa عليه السلام was born hundreds of year later. So, it is impossible that the two could have met in the world in their physical self. How, then, they met and where? The *Hadith* of the Prophet ﷺ is silent on this issue. The Ulama have, nevertheless, advanced some explanation. Allama Navavi, the commentator of Sahih Muslim, for example, has stated:

> "Abu Al-Hasan Al-Qabisi has said that the souls of the two Prophets met in the heaven (sky) and they debated there.
>
> Qadi Ayad Maliki has said, 'This *Hadith* is to be taken at its words. Both of them met physically. We have seen in the account of Al-Isra' that the Prophet ﷺ met the other Prophets عليهم السلام in the heavens and also led them in *Salat* at Bayt Al-Maqdis. Hence, it is not beyond reasoning that Allah might have given them life again as it is related about the martyrs.'
>
> There is also the possibility that they may have met and debated at the request of Musa عليه السلام to Allah that he may be allowed to meet Aadam عليه السلام in this world." (Nawavi, on Sahih Muslim 2/335)

Sayyidina Musa عليه السلام reminded Sayyidina Aadam عليه السلام of the favours of Allah upon him. He was created, given a soul, created as a perfect human being, the angels were commanded to prostrate before him, given residence in Paradise–these favours called upon Aadam عليه السلام that he should have refrained from eating from the forbidden tree because Allah had placed on him that only one restriction.

Sayyidina Aadam عليه السلام gave Sayyidina Musa عليه السلام an answer about which the Holy Prophet ﷺ said, "It silenced Musa."

He began with recounting the favours Allah had conferred upon Musa عليه السلام. "O Musa! Allah chose you as a Prophet and Messenger, honoured you by speaking to you directly and granted you the Tablets of Torah. After receiving this honour, it did not behove you to speak to me as you did. Just tell me, how much before my creation was the Torah written down?" When Musa عليه السلام confirmed that it was written down forty years before the creation of Aadam عليه السلام, he said, "Have you not read in it the verse: وَعَصَىٰ آدَمُ رَبَّهُ

فغوى (And Aadam disobeyed his Lord, so he erred)?"[1] He said, "Yes, of course!" Then Aadam عليه السلام asked him, "Then, in spite of that you blame me for something that Allah had decreed already forty years before my creation?" (That is, he was to do something for which he would be expelled from Paradise.)

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ concluded that Sayyidina Aadam عليه السلام gave a convincing reply. His reply convinced Sayyidina Musa عليه السلام that it was wrong to blame Aadam عليه السلام because all of us are bound by the Will of Allah Who had decided that man would be sent to earth and would be appointed His *Khalifah* (vicegerent) on earth. There was much wisdom behind that decision all of which was undisclosed. It was to begin with Aadam عليه السلام residing in Paradise and disallowing him to approach a particular tree and its fruit. But, he would be tempted by the devil into eating that fruit and would thus be punished and sent to earth. Therefore, the reason for his expulsion from Paradise was not his eating the fruit but it was the Will of Allah and His predestination ordained for Aadam عليه السلام.

Lessons and Messages

The *Hadith* gives us a number of messages:

1. The first message relates to correction of belief on predestination. The *Hadith* refutes those who do not believe in predestination. Nothing happens against the Will of Allah and what He has predestined. Whatever happens in the world follows predestination as ordained by Allah–although man does often use the choice that Allah has bestowed on him. It is on the correct use, or misuse, of the choice that he is rewarded or punished. Anyway, it is a basic part of faith that we should believe in predestination otherwise our faith and belief is imperfect.

2. The second message concerns etiquette and morals. The *Hadith* tells us that religious guides may hold differing opinions for which an oral debate and discussion is allowed. However, the limits of *Shari'ah* must be observed and the exercise should be undertaken to propagate truth. Besides, it is the characteristic of these people that they should accept the truth when it is disclosed or confirmed. Sayyidina Musa عليه السلام knew that Sayyidina Aadam's عليه السلام

[1] Ta Ha, 20: 121.

argument was correct and he accepted it.

3. It is imperative that Believers believe in the unseen. What the truthful Prophet ﷺ tells us of the unseen, we must believe in that and regard as true. The story under discussion is an example of that. It is wholly a news of the unknown. The Holy Prophet ﷺ learnt it through *wahy* (revelation) and he passed it on to us. We must believe in everything the Holy Prophet ﷺ tells us whether we encompass it or not with our limited understanding.

However, the news of the unseen that other people give us is not reliable, for instance, what the sorcerers or astrologers say. It is not correct to believe in what they say. Similarly, it is wrong to rely on the so-caled *pirs*, spiritualists and holy-men who claim for themselves divine-nearness particularly when their behaviour goes against *Shari'ah.*

4. An important information we receive from the *Hadith* is that the Torah was written down forty years before the creation of Sayyidina Aadam عليه السّلام.

Another important disclosure is that Allah had composed the Turah in His Own Hand (–that is as is worthy of Him).

Both these things reflect on the excellence of Torah. Again the verse:

وَعَصٰى آدَمُ رَبَّهٗ فَغَوٰىO

{And Aadam disobeyed his Lord so he erred.}

It is in the Qur'an. It is a part of Torah too but the present copies of the Book have dropped it.

5. The *Hadith* also teaches us that when two people differ on an opinion and debate on the issue then they must both describe each other's good qualities so that the difference of opinion does not lead them to hate each other. Sayyidina Musa عليه السّلام took care to describe the excellences of Sayyidina Aadam عليه السّلام and, in his turn, Sayyidina Aadam عليه السّلام remembered the merits of Sayyidina Musa عليه السّلام.

The Eighth Story

The Case of Musa عليه السّلام And the Stone

Introductory Words

The Children of Isra'il are a people who have caused the Prophets untold sufferings. They even killed a number of them. Their stubbornness is proverbial. The supplications of Sayyidina Musa عليه السّلام earned them numerous benefits from Allah and there were many occasions when his prayers got them relief from trying circumstances. In spite of that, some of their mischievous numbers did not stop from causing hardship to Sayyidina Musa عليه السّلام. Once, these people made it known that Musa عليه السّلام had a disease on his private parts and anyone who had it was called *Adrah*. Allah, however, decreed that this accusation should be refuted; hence, the following incident took place.

روى البخاري في صحيحه: عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللّٰه عَنه قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ ﷺ: إِنَّ مُوْسَى كَانَ رَجُلاً حَيِيًّا سِتِّيْرًا لا يُرَى مِنْ جلْدِهِ شَيْءٌ اسْتِحْيَاءً مِّنْهُ، فَآذَاهُ مَنْ آذَاهُ مِنْ بَنِيْ إِسْرَائِيْلَ، فَقَالُوا: مَا يَسْتَتِرُ هَذَا التَّسَتُّرَ إلا مِنْ عَيْبٍ بجِلْدِهِ، إِمَّابَرَصٌ، وَإِمَّا أُدْرَةٌ، وَإِمَّا آفَةٌ.

وَإِنَّ اللّٰه أَرَادَ أَنْ يُبَرِّئَهُ مِمَّا قَالُوا لِمُوْسَى، فَخَلا يَوْماً وَحْدَهُ، فَوَضَعَ ثِيَابَهُ عَلَى الْحَجَرِ، ثُمَّ اغْتَسَلَ، فَلَمَّا فَرَغَ أَقْبَلَ إِلَى ثِيَابِهِ لِيَأْخُذَهَا، وَإِنَّ الْحَجَرَ عَدَا بِثَوْبِهِ، فَأَخَذَ مُوْسَى عَصَاهُ فَرَأَوْهُ عُرْيَانًا أَحْسَنَ مَا خَلَقَ اللّٰه، وَأَبْرَأَهُ مِمَّا يَقُوْلُوْنَ، وَقَامَ الْحَجَرُ، فَأَخَذَ ثَوْبَهُ فَلَبِسَهُ، وَطَفِقَ بِالْحَجَرِ ضَرْبًا بِعَصَاهُ، فَوَاللّٰهِ

إنَّ بِالْحَجَرِ لَنَدَبًا مِّنْ أَثَرِ ضَرْبِه، ثَلاثًا أَوْ أَرْبَعًا أَوْ خَمْسًا، فَذٰلِكَ قَوْلُهُ: [يَآ أَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ آمَنُوْا لَا تَكُوْنُوْا كَالَّذِيْنَ آذَوْا مُوْسٰى فَبَرَّأَهُ اللّٰهُ مِمَّا قَالُوْا وَكَانَ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ وَجِيْهًا] (الأحزاب: ٦٩)

وَفِيْ رِوَايَة عِنْدَهُ عَنْ أَبِيْ هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ، قَالَ: كَانَتْ بَنُوْا إِسْرَائِيْلَ يَغْتَسِلُوْنَ عُرَاةً، يَنْظُرُ بَعْضُهُمْ إِلَى بَعْض، وَكَانَ مُوْسٰى عَلَيْهِ السَّلام يَغْتَسِلُ وَحْدَهُ، فَقَالُوْا وَاللّٰهِ مَا يَمْنَعُ مُوْسَى أَنْ يَّغْتَسِلَ مَعَنَا إِلاَّ أَنَّهُ آدَرُ، فَذَهَبَ مَرَّةً يَّغْتَسِلُ، فَوَضَعَ ثَوْبَهُ عَلَى حَجَرٍ، فَفَرَّ الْحَجَرُ بِثَوْبِه، فَخَرَجَ مُوْسٰى فِيْ إِثْرِهِ يَقُوْلُ: ثَوْبِيْ يَا حَجَرُ، حَتَّى نَظَرَتْ بَنُوْ إِسْرَئِيْلَ إِلَى مُوْسٰى، فَقَالُوْا: وَاللّٰهِ مَا بِمُوسَى مِنْ بَأْسٍ، وَأَخَذَ ثَوْبَهُ، فَطَفِقَ بِالْحَجَرِ ضَرْبًا فَقَالَ أَبُوْ هُرَيْرَةَ: وَاللّٰهِ إِنَّهُ لَنَدَبٌ بِالْحَجَرِ سِتَّةٌ أَوْ سَبْعَةٌ ضَرْبًا بِالْحَجَرِ.

Translation

[Bukhari has transmitted the *Hadith* narrated by Abu Hurayrah رضی الله عنه that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

Musa was a very modest person who kept himself covered, none of his body could be seen because of his extreme modesty. Some of the Bani Isra'il annoyed him by saying, "He conceals himself to this extent only because of a defect in his skin, either leprosy or scrutal hernia, or some other defect," but Allah wished to clear him. So one day while he was alone, he took off his clothes and put them under a stone and had a bath. When he had finished having the bath he turned towards his clothes but the stone took them and fled. Musa picked up his staff and ran after the stone, saying, "My garment, stone! My garment, stone!" (He raced) till he reached a company of the Bani Isra'il who saw him naked in the most beautiful form Allah had created so they cleared of what they used to accuse him. The stone stopped there and Musa took his garment (and put them on). He began to beat the stone with his staff.

By Allah, the stone still has some traces of the effect of beating, three, four or five scars. This is what to which Allah

refers when He said:

يَآ اَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ آمَنُوْا لَا تَكُوْنُوْا كَالَّذِيْنَ آذَوْ مُوْسٰى فَبَرَّأَهُ اللّٰهُ مِمَّا قَالُوْا وَكَانَ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ وَجِيْهًا

{O you who believe! Be not like those who anoyed Musa, but Allah cleared him of what they said, and he was honoured in Allah's sight.}[1]]

In another version of Bukhari, Sayyidina Abu Hurayrah رضی الله عنه has quoted the Prophet ﷺ as saying:

[The Bani Isra'il used to take bath in the nude (all together) looking at one another (shamelessly). Musa عليه السّلام used to take bath alone (because of his modesty). They said, "By Allah, nothing prevents Musa from taking a bath with us except that he has a scrotal hernia (or some other disease). So, once Musa went to take a bath and put his clothes over a stone and then that stone ran away with his garment. Musa followed that stone saying, "My garment, O stone! My garment, O stone!" Till the Bani Isra'il saw him and said, "By Allah, Musa has no defect on his body." Musa picked up his garment and began to beat the stone.

Abu Hurayrah added: By Allah! There are still six or seven scars on the stone from that beating.][2]

(Bukhari, Book of Prophets and Book of Bath. Muslim, Book of Excellence–Excellence ofMusa.)

Explanation

The truth was that it was the custom of the people of that time to bathe in the nude at the well and they did not consider it to be immodest. Sayyidina Musa عليه السّلام, however, did not follow the custom and did not bathe naked. He followed the dictates of *Shari'ah* and modesty and he did not bathe in public. He was so modest that he did not uncover any portion of his body. The people read another meaning in this behaviour and publicised that he had a defect on his body which he did not like others to know. It was very painful to Sayyidina Musa عليه السّلام for it is the way of Allah that He not only creates His Prophets perfect in their spiritual life but He also in their physical built. They have no physical disability or

[1] Al-Ahzab, 33: 69. Bukhari, 3404. [2] Bukhari, # 278.

shortcoming. Thus, Allah decided to refute the Bani Isra'il's accusation and disclose the physical perfection and beauty of Musa عليه السلام. We have seen in the *Hadith* how this was done.

When the stone flew with the garment of Sayyidina Musa عليه السلام with the command of Allah, he chased it until it stopped before a group of the Bani Isra'il. They saw him naked and realised that he was free from all the defects they had been claiming he had. When the purpose was served the stone stopped. Musa عليه السلام claimed his garment and in a fit of anger and mental agony he released his staff on the stone so that it had scars on it. It is in reference to this incident that the verse of the Qur'an was revealed:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ آذَوْا مُوسَىٰ فَبَرَّأَهُ اللَّهُ مِمَّا قَالُوا وَكَانَ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَجِيهًا

{O you who believe! Be not like those who annoyed Musa, but Allah cleared him of what they said, and he was honoured in Allah's sight.} (Al-Ahzab, 33:69)

Lessons and Messages

1. Allah does not tolerate that anyone should annoy His Prophets. He clears them immediately. Accordingly, He absolved Musa عليه السلام absolutely so that he should not be blamed again.

That is why, He pointed out this incident and commanded the Believers that they should not behave as those people who annoyed Musa عليه السلام. In fact, in the verses preceding this one by two sections, Allah had instructed the Believers how they should conduct themselves with the Prophet ﷺ and cautioned them that some of their actions were difficult for the Prophet ﷺ.

Allah will not allow anyone to cause suffering to His Prophets and if any foolish person would try to do that He would stop it immediately.

2. It is not known for a stone to pick up clothes and fly away for it is lifeless and inanimate but everything is subject to the command of Allah. It was, therefore, a demonstration of His perfect power and authority.

In the same way, it is through Allah's power that a wooden stick caused scars on a stone. Stone is harder than wood and wood is

liable to break if a stone is struck by it, and it leaves no mark on the stone.

The truth is exactly as we have just said. The peculiarities of everything depend on the command of Allah. Fire burns but when Allah ordered it, the fire turned cool for Ibrahim عليه السلام. Again, poison kills man but it was panacea for Khalid bin Walid رضى الله عنه when he drank a bowl of it. It is the characteristic of water that it drowns, but a whole army of the Companions marched over the *Dajlah* (Tigris) on horseback and reached the other side.

Hence, peculiarities of different things are also subject to the command of Allah and He sometimes demonstrates the extraordinary so that the forgetful and unheeding man may put in some thought.

3. We learn from this *Hadith* that even the Prophet عليهم السلام are not safe from the distressing attitude of foolish people. There is lesson in it for those engaged in religious preaching that different people annoy them. They must show patience, for that is the only course left to them and their ranks would be raised on that account.

4. The Holy Prophets عليهم السلام are a perfect example for their people in every respect, manners, habits, social conduct, belief and worship. Allah makes them perfect in their unseen character as well as their outward self. They have a beautiful character and a handsome appearance. People are attracted to them and are inclined to listen to them. As for Musa عليه السلام, Allah spoke highly of his personality as we have seen.

Thus, *Shari'ah* also calls for the apparent personality and those responsible for religious teaching and preaching should pay attention to their outward respectability so that worldly people are inclined towards them and tend to listen to them. However, this respectability is not dependant on make-up but is a natural gift from Allah. It is common observation that Allah awards the noble *Ulama* perfection in their inward spiritual life as also in their outward personality.

Therefore, it is proper and praiseworthy for man to use available modes to enhance outward upkeep. Numerous *Ahadith* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, both oral and practical, exhort us to adopt such means.

5. Sometimes, respectable people of an imposing personality also have to encounter situations beyond their power when they are

compelled to act in an unbecoming manner. Musa عليه السّلام too was compelled by situation to behave in a way not compatible with his imposing outward personality and great inward character, of course, there is tremendous wisdom and reasoning concealed in such a case as we saw in the example of Musa عليه السّلام.

The Ninth Story

Musa عليه السّلام and the Angel of Death

First Words

The Prophet Musa عليه السّلام was a man of quick-temper. He was a majestic, awe-inspiring, wrathful person. The Prophets had the strength of the men of Paradise. He had given but one blow to the coopt (*Qutbi*) and that man died. We can imagine how quick-temper he was from his striking his staff on the stone. When the angel of death came to take away his soul and took his permission, he demonstrated supreme majesty and the hand of Musa عليه السّلام gave the angel-in-human-form a black eye.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ describes this amazing incident in this manner:

رَوِيُ الْبُخَارِيْ فِيْ صَحِيْحه عَنْ أَبِيْ هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: أُرْسِلَ مَلَكُ الْمَوْتِ إِلَى مُوْسٰى عَلَيْهِمَا السَّلام، فَلَمَّا جَاءَ هُ صَكَّهُ، فَرَجَعَ إِلَى رَبِّهِ فَقَالَ أَرْسَلْتَنِيْ إِلَى عَبْدٍ لا يُرِيْدُ الْمَوْتَ، فَرَدَّ اللّٰه عَلَيْهِ عَيْنَهُ، وَقَالَ: ارْجِعْ فَقُلْ لَهُ: يَضَعُ يَدَهُ عَلَى مَتنِ ثَوْرٍ فَلَهُ بِكُلِّ مَا غَطَّتْ بِهِ يَدُهُ بِكُلِّ شَعْرَةٍ سَنَةٌ، قَالَ: أَيْ رَبِّ، ثُمَّ مَا ذَا؟ قَالَ: ثُمَّ الْمَوْتُ، قَالَ: فَالآنَ، فَسَأَلَ اللّٰه أَنْ يُّدْنِيَهُ مِنَ الأَرْضِ الْمُقَدَّسَةِ رَمْيَةً بِحَجَرٍ، قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ ﷺ فَلَوْ كُنْتُ ثَمَّ، لأَرَيْتُكُمْ قَبْرَهُ إِلَى جَانِبِ الطَّرِيْقِ عِنْدَ الْكَثِيْبِ الأَحْمَرِ.

وَفِيْ رِوَايَةٍ عِنْدَ مُسْلِم: جَاءَ مَلَكُ الْمَوْتِ إِلَى مُوْسَى عَلَيْهِ السَّلام فَقَالَ لَهُ: أَجِبْ رَبَّكَ، قَالَ: فَلَطَمَ مُوْسٰى عَلَيْهِ السَّلام عَيْنَ مَلَكِ الْمَوْتِ فَفَقَأَهَا،

قَالَ: فَرَجَعَ الْمَلَكُ إِلَى اللّٰهِ تَعَالَى، فَقَالَ: إِنَّكَ أَرْسَلْتَنِيْ إِلَى عَبْدٍ لَكَ لا يُرِيْدُ الْمَوْتَ، وَقَدْ فَقَأَ عَيْنِيْ، قَالَ: فَرَدَّ اللّٰهُ إِلَيْهِ عَيْنَهُ، وَقَالَ: ارْجِعْ إِلَى عَبْدِيْ فَقُلِ الْحَيَاةَ تُرِيْدُ؟ فَإِنْ كُنْتَ تُرِيْدُ الْحَيَاةَ فَضَعْ يَدَكَ عَلَى مَتْنِ ثَوْرٍ، فَمَا تَوَارَتْ يَدُكَ مِنْ شَعْرَةٍ فَإِنَّكَ تَعِيْشُ بِهَا سَنَةً، قَالَ: ثُمَّ مَهْ؟ قَالَ: ثُمَّ تَمُوْتُ. قَالَ: فَالآنَ مِنْ قَرِيْبٍ رَبِّ. قَالَ: أَمِتْنِيْ مِنَ الأَرْضِ الْمُقَدَّسَةِ رَمْيَةً بِحَجَرٍ، قَالَ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ ﷺ: وَاللّٰه لَوْ أَنِّيْ عِنْدَهُ، لأَرَيْتُكُمْ قَبْرَهُ إِلَى جَانِبِ الطَّرِيْقِ عِنْدَ الْكَثِيْبِ الأَحْمَرِ.

Translation

[Sayyidina Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه said: The angel of death was sent to Musa عليه السّلام. When he came to him, Musa slapped him (and knocked out his eye). The angel returned to his Lord and said, "You have sent me to a slave who does not want to die." Allah (restored his eye and) said, "Return to him and tell him to put his hand on the back of an ox and for every hair that will come under it, he will be granted one year of life." Musa asked, "O Lord! What will happen after that?" Allah replied, "Then death." Musa said, "Let it come now." Musa then requested Allah to let him die close to the Sacred Land so much so that he would be at a stone's throw distance." (Abu Hurayrah added:) Allah's Messenger ﷺ said, "If I were there, I would show you his grave below the red sandhill on the side of the road."] (This is the version of Bukhari)

The version in Muslim is:

[Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه reported the Messenger of Allah ﷺ as saying, that the Angel of Death came to Musa and said, "Respond (to the call) of Allah (that is, be prepared for death)." Musa gave a blow at the eye of the Angel of Death and knocked it out. The Angel went back to Allah and said, "You sent me to Your servant who does not like to die and he knocked out my eye." Allah restored his eye to its proper place (and revived his eyesight) and said, "Go to My servant and say, 'Do you want life? And in case you want life, keep your hand on the body of

the ox and you would live such number of years as the (number of) hair your hand covers'." He said, "What, then?" He said, "Then you would die", whereupon Musa said, "Then why not now?" (He then prayed), "Allah cause me to die close to the sacred land." The Messenger of Allah added, "Had I been near that place I would have shown his grave by the side of the path at the red mound."] (Bukhari: *Kitab Al-Janaiz, Hadith* # 1339. Muslim: *Kitab Al-Fadail, Hadith* # 5851, 5852)

Explanation

This *Hadith* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ informs us that before He gives them death, Allah offers His Prophets choice between death and life. This is because of their distinction and honour.

Some *Ahadith* tell us that Sayyidah Ayshah رضی الله عنهما said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was also given the choice and he preferred to meet the highest companions. He said:

أَللّٰهُمَّ الرَّفِيْقَ الأَعْلٰى!

"O Allah, near the highest and best companions."

These were the last words of the pure life and then the soul travelled to the higher world:

اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ وَّعَلٰى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا صَلَّيْتَ عَلٰى إِبْرَاهِيْمَ وَعَلٰى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيْمَ إِنَّكَ حَمِيْدٌ مَّجِيْدٌ. اَللّٰهُمَّ بَارِكْ عَلٰى مُحَمَّدٍ وَّعَلٰى آلِ مُحَمَّدٍ كَمَا بَارَكْتَ عَلٰى إِبْرَاهِيْمَ وَعَلٰى آلِ إِبْرَاهِيْمَ إِنَّكَ حَمِيْدٌ مَّجِيْدٌ.

O Allah! Bless him and give him peace.

Anyway, when Allah sent the angel of death to Sayyidina Musa عليه السّلام, He sent him in human form. The Angel of Death 'Izra'il عليه السّلام, said to him, "Answer willingly the summons of your Lord!" This was, in fact, the sounding of the approach of the appointed time. As we have seen, Musa عليه السّلام was of a quick temper and on hearing this, he slapped the angel and knocked out his human eye.

Sayyidina 'Izra'il عليه السّلام was in a human form so he had human characteristics in him and that is why Musa عليه السّلام was able to slap him. Allah has bestowed the Prophet عليهم السّلام with the power and ability of men of Paradise, but if the angel of death had come in his own form, Musa عليه السّلام would not have been able to slap him.

'Izra'il عليه السلام went to Allah and complained that the slave to whom He had sent him was unwilling to die.

Allah instructed him to return to Musa عليه السلام and give him the choice between death and life. If he wished to live he may place his hand on the back of an ox and the number of hair he can enclose within his grasp would represent the number of years of his life. But, Musa عليه السلام asked Allah, "My Lord! What will happen after those many years?" He was told that he would get death after those years. (That is the end of every living soul.) Musa عليه السلام commented that if death was the end anyway then why delay it. "My Lord, I am prepared now! But, my desire is that death comes to me near the sacred land (*Bayt Al-Maqdis*)." Allah let him have his desire.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "If I was there, I would have shown you his grave which lies near the red mound."

Although he got a choice. Musa عليه السلام chose to die. He thought death would strike sooner or later, then why refuse to die when the angel had come. He would be saved the difficulties of life and would be honoured with meeting Allah. While the souls of the martyrs fly in Paradise as green birds, those of the Prophets would certainly enjoy more nearness to Allah.

وَلَلْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ لَّكَ مِنَ الْأُولَىٰ

{And certainly the Hereafter is better for you than the present.}

(Ad-Duha, 93:4)

Lessons and Messages

1. We learn of the greatness and respect enjoyed by the Prophets عليهم السلام. Allah lets them know before their death by offering them choice between death and life.

2. The angels take up human form by the Will of Allah. When they are in human form the angels get the human characteristics too. That is why the angel lost his eye when Musa عليه السلام slapped him otherwise a human being is not strong enough to slap an angel.

3. We also learn from the *Hadith* that it is proper for a man to desire and supplicate Allah to cause him to die at a sacred place. Musa عليه السلام had wished to die at the sacred land. On this basis, it is also proper to wish and pray for death at an auspicious moment or

during blessed days.

Thus, a person may pray that he die during Ramadan or on a Friday. However, only that will happen what Allah chooses.

It must also be understood that if a man dies at a sacred place or on an auspicious moment or during blessed days it does not follow that he will receive salvation. That depends merely on deeds and their acceptance by Allah. It is true, however, that man may receive the blessings of a sacred place or an auspicious moment or days. But Allah knows best!

The Tenth Story

The Old Woman of the Bani Isra'il

First Words

If Allah causes some people to think of the Hereafter then they spend every moment of their lives in trying to improve their chances of a better life in that world and to have a companionship of honourable people there.

Among such people was the old woman of the Bani Israil whom Allah had granted a long life. She used that blessing to better her future life. She did not waste this opportunity.

Musa عليه السلام asked her to show him the grave of Yusuf عليه السلام so that when he took the Bani Isra'il away from Egypt, he could carry away his corpse too. The old woman refused to oblige him unless he promised her his company in Paradise. Allah granted her this wish. Brave people have their eyes on high targets. Among such brave people were the Companions رضى الله عنهم of the Holy Prophet ﷺ and notable among them was Ukkasha bin Mihsan رضى الله عنه. He did not miss the opportunity when the Holy Prophet ﷺ revealed to his Companions that there would be seventy thousand such pious people who would go to Paradise directly without reckoning of any sort. This notable Companion got up eagerly and pleaded with his beloved Prophet ﷺ, "Messenger of Allah! Pray to Allah that I be one of them!" The Prophet ﷺ supplicated for him and gave him glad tidings that he would be one of those. Their faces would be brilliant, luminous, free from unpleasantness.

رَوِي الْحَاكِمْ فِيْ مُسْتَدْرَكِهِ عَنْ أَبِيْ مُوْسٰى: أَن رَسُوْلَ اللّٰه ﷺ نزل بأعرابيْ فأكرمه فقال له: (يَا أعْرَابِيْ سَلْ حَاجَتَكَ) قَالَ: يَا رَسُوْلَ اللّٰه، نَاقَة

بِرَحْلِهَا، وَأَعَنْزٌ يَحْلِبُهَا أَهْلِي، قَالَهَا مَرَّتَيْنْ.

فَقَالَ لَهُ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ ﷺ: (أَعْجَزْتَ أَنْ تَكُوْنَ مِثْلَ عَجُوْزِ بَنِيْ إِسْرَائِيْلَ)

فَقَالَ أَصْحَابُه: يَا رَسُوْلَ اللّٰهِ، وَمَا عَجُوْزُ بَنِيْ إِسْرَائِيْلَ؟

قَالَ: (أَنَّ مُوْسَى أَرَادَ أَنْ يَّسِيْرَ بِبَنِيْ إِسْرَائِيْلَ فَأَضَلَّ عَنِ الطَّرِيْقِ، فَقَالَ لَهُ عُلَمَآءُ بَنِيْ إِسْرَائِيْلَ، نَحْنُ نُحَدِّثُكَ أَنَّ يُوْسُفَ أَخَذَ عَلَيْنَا مَوَاثِيْقَ اللّٰهِ أَنْ لا نَخْرُجَ مِنْ مِّصْرَ حَتّٰى نَنْقُلَ عِظَامَهُ مَعَنَا، قَالَ: وَأَيُّكُمْ يَدْرِيْ أَيْنَ قَبْرَ يُوْسُفَ؟

قَالُوْا: مَا تَدْرِيْ أَيْنَ قَبْرَ يُوْسُفَ إِلا عَجُوْزُ بَنِيْ إِسْرَائِيْلَ، فَأَرْسَلَ إِلَيْهَا فَقَالَ: دَلِّيْنِيْ عَلَى قَبْرِ يُوْسُفَ. فَقَالَتْ: لا وَاللّٰهِ لا أَفْعَلُ حَتّٰى أَكُوْنَ مَعَكَ فِيْ الْجَنَّةِ. قَالَ: وَكَرِهَ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ مَا قَالَتْ فَقِيْلَ لَهُ: أَعْطِهَا حُكْمَهَا فَأَعْطَاهَا حُكْمَهَا فَأَتَتْ بُحَيْرَةَ فَقَالَتْ: انْضُبُوْا هَذَا الْمَاءَ فَلَمَّا نَضَبُوْهُ قَالَتْ: احْفِرُوْا هٰهُنَا، فَلَمَّا حَفَرُوْا إِذَا عِظَامُ يُوْسُفَ، فَلَمَّا أَقَلُّوْهَا مِنَ الأَرْضِ فَإِذَا الطَّرِيْقَ مِثْلَ ضَوْءِ النَّهَارِ.

Translation

[Hakim has transmitted in Mustadrak that Abu Musa Al-Ash'ari has narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ once visited an *A'rabi*, a villager. He received him very well and respected the Prophet ﷺ very much. The Prophet ﷺ was very happy and said to him, "O *A'rabi* ask what you want!" He said, "Messenger of Allah, a she-camel with her saddle and a few sheep whose milk should satisfy my family members." He made this request twice.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Was it not possible for you to ask me as the old woman of the Bani Isra'il did ask Musa?"

The Companions رضى الله عنهم asked him, "O Messenger of Allah! What is the story of the old woman of the Bani Isra'il?"

He said to them, "Musa عليه السّلام decided to emigrate with the Bani Isra'il but he got lost on the way. So, their educated people said to him, "We tell you that Yusuf عليه السّلام had got our ancestors to promise that we would not go away from Egypt

unless we took his bones away with us. Perhaps, we are lost because we have not fulfilled the promise." Musa عليه السلام asked them which of them could point out his grave.

They said that none apart from an old woman of the Bani Isra'il could point out the grave. Musa عليه السلام sent a messenger to fetch her and requested her to guide them to the grave of Yusuf عليه السلام.

She said, "No, by Allah, no! I will never do that unless (you promise me that) I live with you in Paradise."

Musa عليه السلام did not like what she said. However, he was told in a *wahy* that he should promise her what she wanted and he accepted her demand.

The old woman took them to a small pond and said to them, "Take out this water!" When the water was pumped out, she said, "Dig here!"

When they had dug out the earth, they found the bones of Yusuf عليه السلام inside. Then they continued their exile with the bones of Yusuf with them. The path was clear to them shining like day-light] (Hakim in Mustadrak 2/644)

Explanation

Why did the Prophet ﷺ narrate this story to his Companions? The reason is explained in the commencing portion of the *Hadith*. The Prophet ﷺ stayed with a villager during an expedition with his Companions رضى الله عنهم, and he gave them a very exceptional reception. The Prophet ﷺ pursued his noraml principle جزاءالإحسان بالإحسان, "The reward of goodness is with goodness." Hence, he said to him that if he had any need, he may ask for it.

But the villager was a very simple man, not very intelligent. He did not think beyond his physical needs. He did not realise that one should ask in keeping with the stature of the person asked, not according to one's own standard. It was not asking too much of the Holy Prophet ﷺ if he asked him to solve his livelihood problems. The fellow asked according to his own perspective–a she-camel, with saddle to ride, a few sheep to provide milk to his family. His problems were thus solved.

The Prophet ﷺ did not like it. He thought that the man's

demands were petty. He could not even do as the old woman of the Bani Isra'il. He should have asked in keeping with what the Prophet ﷺ should have been asked.

The Companions رضى الله عنهم did not lose a moment to ask him about the old woman of Bani Isra'il.

This is the gist of what the Holy Prophet ﷺ related to them: Sayyidina Musa عليه السّلام took the Bani Isra'il with him while leaving Egypt after Fir'awn had drowned but they lost the way. The scholars and the educated people among them reminded Musa عليه السّلام that Sayyidina Yusuf عليه السّلام had made their ancestors promise that they would carry his dead body away with them if they ever emigrated from Egypt. They thought that they might have lost their way because of forgetting to take his remains with them.

Sayyidina Musa عليه السّلام enquired if any of them knew where the grave was but they said that none of them knew that except an old lady who knew where it was. So, Musa عليه السّلام asked that they may bring her to him. He requested her, "Show me where the grave of Yusuf عليه السّلام is?"

The woman found for herself an opportunity to get from the Prophet what she most cherished. She offered to show him the grave on condition that he promise her that she would have his company in Paradise. Her standard was very high. She asked according to what behove the giver, the Prophet.

Sayyidina Musa عليه السّلام did not like her attitude. She should not have asked in that manner. Besides, what she had asked was not within his powers.

Nevertheless, Allah Commanded him through a revelation that he should concede to the old woman's demand. Accordingly, he agreed to her condition and she took him to the grave of Yusuf عليه السّلام.

It was at a pond that she took them and asked them to draw out the water and dig up the earth. They found Yusuf's عليه السّلام remains there in. They carried them along and found their path bright and shining as if it was day-time.

Lessons and Messages

1. We learn from the *Hadith* that man should aim high and

cherish the best. The Prophet ﷺ said, "Was it not possible for you to ask as the old woman of the Bani Isra'il did?" (Instead of worldly benefits, you should have wished for the good of the Hereafter.)

2. The *Hadith* tells us many things of the Bani Isra'il:

The promise that Sayyidina Yusuf عليه السلام had extracted from them. The Qur'an does not mention it but some editions of the Torah speak of it.

We find in Genesis 50: 25,

"Then Joseph asked his people to make a vow. 'Promise me', he said, 'that when God leads you to that land, you will take my body with you'."

Also, in Exodus, 13: 19,

"Moses took the body of Joseph with him, as Joseph had made the Israelites solemnly promise to do. Joseph had said, 'when God rescues you, you must carry my body with you from this place'."

The Prophet ﷺ mentioned this promise and confirmed some of the narrations of Torah.

We also learn that Allah had preserved the grave of Sayyidina Yusuf عليه السلام by concealing it in water.

3. Sometimes Allah warns and cautions a people through some bottlenecks when they forget an undertaking. The Bani Isra'il were thus reminded by making them use their way because they had forgotten their promise to Yusuf عليه السلام.

4. We also learn that succeeding generations are bound by the promise by their ancestors to Prophets concerning future. The undertaking of the Bani Isra'il to Yusuf عليه السلام was binding on the future generation of Bani Isra'il. The Prophet ﷺ got his Companions to swear allegiance which was binding on them as well as their future generations.

The Eleventh Story

Samiri..... Worshipper of the Calf

First Words

After Musa عليه السلام had gone to Mount Tur, Samiri moulded out of golden jewellery a calf. Then he put into it the earth that was beneath the hoof of Jibril's عليه السلام horse so that it began to breathe. His people then worshipped the calf. The Qur'an has narrated this incident, in brief at some occasions but in detail at some others. This *Hadith* describes yet other details of this incident.

روى الحاكم في مستدركه عن علي رضي الله عنه قال: لَمَّا تَعَجَّلَ مُوْسٰى إِلَى رَبِّه عَمِدَ السَّامِرِيُّ فَجَمَعَ مَا قَدِرَ عَلَيْهِ مِن الْحُلِيِّ: حُلّي بَنِي إِسْرَائِيْلَ، فَضَرَبَهُ عِجْلاً، ثُمَّ أَلْقَى الْقَبْضَةَ فِيْ جَوْفِهِ فَإِذَا هُوَ عِجْلٌ لَّهُ خِوَار، فَقَالَ لَهُمُ السَّامِرِيُّ، هٰذَاإِلٰهُكُمْ وَإِلٰهُ مُوْسٰى، فَقَالَ لَهُمْ هَارُوْنُ: يَا قَوْمِ أَلَمْ يَعِدْكُمْ رَبُّكُمْ وَعْدًا حَسَنًا؟ فَلَمَّا أَنْ رَّجَعَ مُوْسٰى إِلَى بَنِيْ إِسْرَائِيْلَ، وَقَدْ أَضَلَّهُمُ السَّامِرِيُّ أَخَذَ بِرَ أْسِ أَخِيْهِ، فَقَالَ لَهُ هٰرُوْنُ: مَا قَالَ؟ فَقَالَ مُوْسٰى للسَّامِرِي: مَا خَطْبُك؟ قَالَ السَّامِرِيُّ: قَبَضْتُ قَبْضَةً مِّن أَثَرِ الرَّسُوْلِ فَنَبَذْتُهَا وَكَذَالِكَ سَوَّلَتْ لِي نَفْسِي.

قَالَ: فَعَمَدَ مُوْسٰى إِلَى الْعِجْلِ فَوَضَعَ عَلَيْهِ الْمَبارِدَ فَبَرَدَهُ بِهَا، وَهُوَ عَلَى شَفَى نَهْر، فَمَا شَرِبَ أَحَدٌ مِّنْ ذٰلِكَ الْمَاء مِمَّنْ كَانَ يَعْبُدِ ذَالِكَ الْعِجْلَ إلا اصْفَرَّ وَجْهُهُ مِثْلَ الذَّهَبِ، فَقَالُوْا لِمُوْسٰى: مَا تَوْبَتُنَا؟ قَالَ: يَقْتُلُ بَعْضُكُمْ بَعْضًا، فَأَخَذُوْا السَكَاكِيْنَ، فَجَعَلَ الرَجُلُ يَقْتُلُ أَبَاهُ وَأَخَاهُ وَلا يُبَالِي مَنْ قَتَلَ

حَتّٰى قُتِلَ مِنْهُمْ سَبْعُوْنَ اَلْفاً، فَأَوْحَى اللّٰه إِلَى مُوْسَى مُرْهُمْ فَلْيَرْفَعُوْا أَيْدِيَهُمْ فَقَدْ غَفَرْتُ لِمَنْ قُتِلَ، وَتُبْتُ عَلَى مَنْ بَقِيَ.

Translation

[Hakim has transmitted in Mustadrak the narration of Sayyidina Ali رضی الله عنه. He said:

After Musa عليه السّلام had gone to his Lord, Samiri (a sorcerer) decided (to mould a calf). He collected all the jewellery he could from the Bani Isra'il. He moulded the jewellery into the form of a calf. He then put into its hollow a handful of dust so that it began to make sounds (like a calf with life); he said to the Bani Isra'il, "This is your god and the god of Musa."

Sayyidina Harun عليه السّلام said to them, "O my people, has not your Lord given you a good promise?"

When Musa returned to them and found that Samiri had misled them already, (in anger) he held the hair of his brother (Harun). Harun told him what he had to say. Then Musa said to Samiri, "How does it fare with you?" (why did you do it?) He said, "I had seized a handful of dust from the footprints of the Messenger (Jibril عليه السّلام) and I put it into this calf. This seemed good to my mind."

Musa took the calf and peeled it with a carpenter's plane. He was at the banks of a river when he was doing it (so that the peelings fell into the river). Thus, whoever of the worshippers of the calf drank the water of the river had his face turn into golden colour. Then they asked Musa how they should repent?

Musa عليه السّلام said, "Kill one another." So, they picked up knives and they began to stab one another. Someone stabbed his father, another person stabbed his brother, without considering whom they killed. In this way they killed seventy thousand of themselves.

Allah then Commanded Musa عليه السّلام through a revelation that they should cease (the killing). He said, "I have forgiven those who have been killed and accepted the repentance of the rest."] (Hakim in Mustadrak, 2/412)

Explanation

As Sayyidina Musa عليه السّلام was going to the Mount Tur with his people, after the drowning of Fir'awn, he increased his pace and advised his people to follow gradually for he was going ahead to engage in worship. He left behind Harun as his deputy but the Samiri decided to mislead the people.

Samiri was from the Samirah tribe a well-known tribe of Syria. Some authorities have suggested that he was a Qutbi (copt) of the family of Fir'awn (the Pharaoh). He was a neighbour of Musa عليه السّلام who had believed in him and joined him.

Ibn Abbas رضی الله عنه said that he was a member of a tribe who worshipped cows. He had arrived in Egypt somehow and had made it appear that he had embraced the religion of the Bani Isra'il but at heart he was a hypocrite (Qurtabi). The marginal notes of Qurtabi suggest that he was a Hindu cow-worshipper from India.

Ibn Jarir has cited Ibn Abbas رضی الله عنه as saying, "It is believed that his name was Musa bin Zafar and he was born at the time when the Pharaoh had decreed that all male offspring of the Bani Isra'il be put to death. His mother was afraid of the police of the Pharaoh who would have killed him in her presence. She thought it better to leave the child in a cave in the wilderness and shut the cave's mouth outside, than see him being put to death." (she may have been paying visits to him now and then.) Allah instructed Jibril عليه السّلام to take care of the child and provide nourishment, and he brought honey on one of his fingers, butter on another and milk on the third. The child would lick his fingers. Gradually he grew up into a young man but he turned out to be (unfaithful and) a disbeliever who led the Bani Isra'il too into disbelief. In the end, he invited upon himself the punishment of Allah." (Ruh al-Ma'ani as quoted in Ma'arif Al-Qur'an 6/135)

A poet has said very aptly:

فموسى الذى رباه جبريل كفر وموسى الذى رباه فرعون مرسل

"The Musa whom Jibril nourished disbelieved, And the Musa whom Fir'awn nourished became a Messenger!"

Neverthless, he collected the jewellery from his people after Musa عليه السّلام was gone and put a handful of dust (into the calf moulded from the jewellery). The dust was what he had picked up from the footprints of Jibril. Samiri had observed when Jibril had

come to Musa عليه السلام once on horseback that wherever he landed his foot the place grew greenery and came to life. He understood that under Jibril's عليه السلام footstep lay traces of life.

According to one version, when the Bani Isra'il were afforded a path across the Red Sea over which they went to the other side, there Samiri saw Jibril. He recognised him because he had nurtured and sustained him.

According to another version, it was the devil who prompted him that under the footprints of Jibril عليه السلام lay signs of life. So, he had picked up a handful of dust from there. He put it in the jewellery and the calf came to life mooing like a real one. Samiri then told the people that Musa (عليه السلام) was gone and it was not known whether he would return or not. "This calf is your god and the god of Musa." (May Allah forgive us!)

Many of the people believed in what he said and did not pay attention to Harun عليه السلام when he tried to stop them.

Musa, meanwhile, returned from Tur, the Tablets of Torah in his hands. He saw that the people whom he had left behind as worshippers of One God had turned to cow-worship. This infuriated him strongly. It were these people on whom Allah had bestowed many blessings and rescued them from the Pharaoh but they had become polytheists. In his anger he held his brother, Harun, by the hair saying, "Why did you not stop them? What prevented you from coming to me at the Tur when these people became idolators? Why did you continue to stay with these polytheists?"

Sayyidina Harun عليه السلام said, "O son of my mother! Listen to me, I did not wish to cause dissension among the Bani Isra'il. If I had brought with me the unitarians numbering twelve thousand to you then it would have created trouble and disagreement among the Bani Isra'il while I was confident that on your return these people would mend their ways."

Sayyidina Harun عليه السلام added, "Also most of these people had gone on the wrong path and very few were on my side. If I had persisted then they might have killed me. I tried to bring them to reason but they did not listen to me and were ready to slay me."

Sayyidina Musa عليه السلام understood his argument and absolved him of blame and turned to the real culprit, Samiri. He asked him

what explanation he had and why he had done the mischief.

He recounted how he had observed life originate on the spots where Jibril's عليه السّلام feet touched the ground and concluded that they had the capability to produce life. Therefore, he seized the earth from those spots and put it in the (contraption of the) jewellery. He boasted, "That was what my heart cherished." Musa عليه السّلام said to him, "Your punishment is that all people will ostracise you in this world." Apart from this social boycott, he also commanded him not to touch anyone and live away from all men like a wild animal.

Traditions tell us that the curse of Musa عليه السّلام had its effect on him so if he touched anyone or anyone else touched him then both of them got fever. (Al-Mu'alim) Therefore, fearing this, he kept himself away from other people and if anyone approached him he would say *La Misas* لامساس ("Do not touch me!") He died finally in this isolated condition. (Summary from Ma'arif Al-Qur'an 6/144)

Lessons and Messages

1. The basic lesson we learn from the *Hadith* of this story is that man must always pray to Allah to keep him steadfast on religious practice. No one can claim for himself that he will always be on the guided path. Someone gets guidance in the beginning but later on Allah takes away from him. His bounties and favours and he is deprived for ever.

This is what happened to Samiri. In the beginning, he was guided and he had joined Musa عليه السّلام but later this blessing was taken away from him and he plunged into perpetual loss. Therefore, we must always ask Allah for safety, steadfastness on religion and inclination towards piety and righteousness. We must never resign ourselves to a condition or be satisfied with our way of living.

2. We also learn from this *Hadith* that the conditions for acceptance of repentance from earlier people were very severe. Sometimes, they were forgiven only after they had killed their own numbers. This is what happened in the foregoing episode. Musa عليه السّلام commanded them to kill one another and about seventy thousand people were killed before their repentance was accepted.

Compared to that, the *Ummah* of Sayyidina Muhammad ﷺ are much better off. Allah has blessed them with extraordinary mercy.

No severe condition is attached for their repentance to be accepted. In fact, repentance is made so easy that anyone may repent when he likes, at any moment, wherever he likes and get forgiveness for his sins. Any slave may seek forgiveness of Allah for his sins sincerely and with a repenting heart, and resolve from the core of his heart not to sin again. At the same time, he must cease the sin without delay.... That purifies him and preserves him from sin. His repentance is accepted, *Insha Allah* (if Allah Wills).

3. This story also tells us that Allah distinguishes His pious slaves from the sinners and the sinners from His pious slaves sometimes through an obvious sign. This is what happened in the story under discussion.

Those who had worshipped the calf had their faces change colour when they drank the water of the river. Their faces became a golden tinge. The calf was peeled and the peeling dropped into the river.

4. Belief in unity of Allah is a great blessing from Him. It is a standard of faith. We must be most careful to protect this faith. If there is any wavering in this regard then man spoils his chances in both this world and the next. Allah has made it very clear that He never forgives idolatory or polytheism. Therefore, we must preserve from associating partners to Him in every way. In fact, we must shun even the doubtful things in this regard.

The Twelfth Story

When the Sun Stops....

First Words

The commanders were leading their forces against the enemy and they saw before them a great force. They were worried with the numerical superiority of the enemy and they believed that victory or defeat depended on numbers.

However the pious slaves of Allah are confident that *often a small party defeats a large one.*[1]

This was (the army of) Yusha' عليه السلام at whose hands the sacred land was conquered by the will of Allah. He was not worried with the large numbers of the enemy nor with strategy to increase the men of his army. He was more concerned with quality than with quantity, for wars are won not with large numbers but with high spirit, faith and belief. He received the command that those who had their hearts set on the world should separate from the army for they would not be able to fight.

He engaged in *Jihad* with his small army against the enemy but was concerned that the encounter may extend into the night. He wished that Allah should grant them victory before sunset. So, he prayed to Allah that the sun should stop its movement towards the night to let them overpower the enemy in day light.... Indeed, it was witnessed that Allah delayed the sunset until He gave them victory. This was a great sign from Allah.

This account has come to us from the truthful Prophet ﷺ.

روى البخاري و مسلم في صحيحيهما عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُ

قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰه ﷺ: غَزَا نَبِيٌّ مِنَ الأَنْبِيَاءِ، فَقَالَ لِقَوْمِهِ: لا يَتْبَعْنِي رَجُلٌ

[1] Al-Baqarah, 2: 249.

مَلَكَ بُضْعَ امْرَأَةٍ وَهُوَ يُرِيْدُ أَنْ يَبْنِيَ بِهَا، وَلَمَّا يَبْنِ بِهَا، وَلا أَحَدٌ بَنَى بُيُوْتاً، وَلَمْ يَرْفَعْ سُقُوْفَهَا، وَلا آخر اشْتَرَى غَنَمًا أَوْ خَلِفَاتٍ وَهُوَ يَنْتَظِرُ وِلادَهَا، فَغَزَا فَدَنَا مِنَ الْقَرْيَةِ صَلاةَ الْعَصْرِ أَوْ قَرِيْبًا مِنْ ذَالِكَ، فَقَالَ لِلشَّمْسِ: إِنَّكِ مَأْمُورَةٌ، وَأَنَا مَأْمُوْرٌ، اللّٰهُمَّ احْبِسْهَا عَلَيْنَا، فَحُبِسَتْ حَتَّى فَتَحَ اللّٰه عَلَيْهِمْ.

فَجَمَعَ الْغَنَائِمَ، فَجَاءَ تْ يَعْنِي النَّارَ لِتَأْكُلَهَا فَلَمْ تَطْعَمْهَا، فَقَالَ: إِنَّ فِيْكُمْ غُلُولا، فَلْيُبَايِعْنِيْ مِنْ كُلِّ قَبِيْلَةٍ رَجُلٌ، فَلَزِقَتْ يَدُ رَجُلٍ بِيَدِهِ، فَقَالَ: فِيْكُمُ الْغُلُولُ.

فَلْيُبَايِعْنِيْ قَبِيْلَتُكَ، فَلَزِقَتْ يَدُ رَجُلَيْنِ أَوْ ثَلاثَةٍ بِيَدِهِ، فَقَالَ: فِيْكُمْ الْغُلُوْلُ، فَجَاءُ وا بِرَأْسٍ بَقَرَةٍ مِنَ الذَّهَبِ، فَوَضَعُوْهَا فَجَاءَ تِ النَّارُ فَأَكَلَتْهَا، ثُمَّ أَحَلَّ اللّٰهُ لَنَا الْغَنَائِمَ، رَأَى ضَعْفَنَا وَعَجْزَنَا، فَأَحَلَّهَا لَنَا.

Translation

[Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said: A Prophet amongst the Prophets carried out a Holy military expedition, so he said to his followers, "Anyone who has married a woman and wants to consummate the marriage and has not done so yet, should not accompany me; nor should a man who has built a house but has not completed its roof; nor a man who has sheep or she-camels and is waiting for the birth of their young ones." So, the Prophet carried out the expedition and when he reached that town at the time or nearly at the time of the *Asr Salat*, he said to the sun, "O sun! You are under Allah's order. O Allah! Stop it (i.e. the sun) from setting." It was stopped till Allah made him victorious.

Then he collected the booty and the fire came to burn it, but it did not burn it. He said (to his men), "Some of you have stolen something from the booty. So, one man from every tribe should give me the pledge by shaking hands with me." (They did so and) the hand of a man got stuck in the hand of their Prophet. Then that Prophet said (to the man). "The theft has been committed by your people. So, all the persons of your tribe

should give me the pledge by shaking hands with me." The hands of two or three men got stuck in the hand of their Prophet and he said, "You have committed the theft." Then they brought a head of gold like the head of a cow and put it there, and the fire came and consumed the booty." The Prophet ﷺ added, "Then Allah saw our weakness and disability, so He made the booty legal for us."] (Bukhari–kitab fard al-Khams # 3124. Muslim–kitab al-Jihad wa as-Sayr # 4327)

Explanation

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ has narrated the story of Sayyidina Yusha' عليه السلام in this *Hadith*. Prophet Yusha' bin Noon عليه السلام succeed Sayyidina Musa عليه السلام as Prophet. Also, according to some traditions he was the one who accompanied Prophet Musa عليه السلام on his journey towards, and meeting with, Sayyidina Khidr عليه السلام.

The *Hadith* narrates the account of one of his *jihad*. Before he set off for the *jihad* he let his people know that three types of men should not join the army.

i) He who had married but not consumated the marriage.

ii) He who was building his house but not raised the roof till then.

iii) He who had bought pregnant camel and cattle and their term was not over by that time.

The reason for rejecting these people was that they could not be expected to concentrate on the war. These things occur in a man's life very seldom, and in many cases, just once. Besides, man depends on these very things–wife, house and cattle. These were the basic needs of that time and part of man's livelihood. If a man's mind is occupied with these things then he will not perform the important obligation of *jihad* well. For, it calls upon the warrior to place his life at stake but if his heart is set elsewhere how will he do it. That is why Prophet Yusha' عليه السلام refused to include these three kinds of men in his army.

When they marched forward and the war commenced, the fighting proceeded well into the time of *Asr*. The situation was very delicate: On the one hand, war was at a stage when a little effort would bring victory but a slight miscalculation could spell defeat,

and, on the other, there was the *Asr Salat* to be offered within time.

Sayyidina Yusha' عليه السلام hoped to gain victory before sunset and darkness. That called for continuous engagement with the enemy which would leave the *Salat* unobserved. So, he first addressed the sun, "You are under orders and we too are under orders." (That is, you are bound by the Command of Allah to follow the determined orbit and we are bound by His command to wage jihad and to offer the *Salat* at the appointed time). He then made the supplication: "O Allah! Cause the sun to stop its progress."

That was a Prophet's supplication. He was a Prophet engaged in the cause of Allah. Why should it not receive approval? Sky-watchers saw that the sun came to a halt and Yusha' عليه السلام continued to fight with determination until Allah granted him victory.

The spoils were collected as was their custom. It was not lawful for those people to take the spoils for themselves but these things were given away for Allah's sake. They would collect the wealth and place it on the top of a mountain. A fire would descend from the heaven and burn the spoils to ashes, and that was considered a sign that their offering was approved. If no fire descended or if the fire did not burn the spoils to ashes then it meant that the offering was rejected.

When Yusha' عليه السلام placed the spoils for the fire, a fire did descend but did not touch the spoils. So, he said, "Someone has betrayed trust. That would be investigated by every tribe sending a representative to me to swear allegiance." Accordingly, every representative shook hands with the Prophet but when one of them came and extended his hand for the handshake, Yusha' عليه السلام told him that the betrayal was done by his tribe and every member must swear allegiance individually so that the culprit could be found out. Hardly had about three men sworn, allegiance when he held them as betrayers.

They confessed their guilt and returned gold equal to the head of a cow. They had concealed it. It was placed with the spoils and a fire from heaven devoured it.

This was the command for earlier people. Later, however, Allah made the spoils lawful for the *Ummah* of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. They are commanded to keep aside one-fifth of the spoils for Allah

and His Messenger, for the *Bayt Al-Maal*. (The poor, needy, orphans are helped by the *Bayt Al-Maal*, State Treasury.) The rest of the spoils are the share of the *ghazi*[1] and *shuhada's*[2] heirs.

Lesson and Messages

We gain very important advantages from the *Hadith* and the account it relates.

1. The advance of Sayyidina Yusha' عليه السلام in *Jihad* affirms that *jihad* and fighting was prescribed. for the previous *Ummah*. It is not peculiar to the *Ummah* of Sayyidina Muhammad ﷺ alone. It proves that *Jihad* is approved by Allah and liked by Him. He had prescribed it in all earlier *Shari'ah* too. In fact, *Jihad* is another name for the sovereignty of Allah, the Lord of the worlds, and for the upholding of His Word. The blessings that Allah bestows on the warriors (literally, the *mujahideen*) and the Muslims cannot be imagined without *Jihad*.

It is for this reason that the Bani Isra'il were punished by Him when they refused to wage *jihad* under Sayyidina Musa عليه السلام against the *Amaliqah* in Syria. They said:

يَآ مُوْسٰى إِنَّا لَنْ نَّدْخُلَهَا اَبَدًا مَّا دَامُوْا فِيْهَا ۝

{O Musa! We shall never enter it so long as they are in it}
(Ma'idah, 5:24)

And they said:

فَاذْهَبْ أَنْتَ وَرَبُّكَ فَقَاتِلَا إِنَّا هٰهُنَا قَاعِدُوْنَ ۝

{Go forth, you and your Lord, and fight; surely here we remain sitting.} (al-Ma'idah, 5:24)

The punishment of Allah followed:

فَإِنَّهَا مُحَرَّمَةٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أَرْبَعِيْنَ سَنَةً يَّتِيْهُوْنَ فِى الْأَرْضِ...... (الآية)

{This (land) shall be forbidden to them for forty years, while they shall wander about on earth....}

Thus they travelled all day and in the evening they imagined that they had reached their destination. But when they woke up in the morning they found themselves at the same place from where they began. Hence, the plain in which they moved round and round is called the plain of *tiyah*. The word is from تيه (teeh) meaning

[1] *ghazi*, the warriors who return alive. [2] *shuhada*, the martyrs.

'straying', 'labyrinth', 'maze', 'wilderness'. These people too were trapped in the labyrinth of shock and worry a punishment against abandoning the obligation of *jihad*.

The Qur'an frequently speaks of the *jihad* of the earlier Prophets. Their *jihad* was in the literal sense meaning warfare. For instance, we are told:

وَكَأَيِّنْ مِنْ نَّبِيٍّ قٰتَلَ مَعَهُ رِبِّيُّوْنَ كَثِيْرٌ

{And many a Prophet there has been who fought (in Allah's way), with whom were many godly men.} (Aal Imran, 3: 146)

The surah *Al-Baqarah* narrated the imposition of *jihad* as an obligation for the Bani Isra'il in detail. (Reference may be made to the commentary on verse 246 of this *surah* in the *Ma'arif al-Qur'an*.)

The *surah Al-Baqarah* also relates in detail the *jihad* of Taloot against Jaloot.

In short, *jihad* is the distinction of the Believer and his honour. For the followers of Islam, Allah has placed in it recognition, protection, blessings and plenty of goodness. Whenever Muslims discharged this obligation, Allah gave them honour and excellence. But, whenever they neglected it, the other nations overwhelmed them and their enemies did not fear them in the least. In spite of wealth, means and luxury, sinful life and great numbers they were disgraced and defeated. This is Allah's decree for them and this is what history reveals for us. May Allah guide us to conduct ourselves according to His dictates and to learn from history. *Aameen!*

2. We also learn from this story that when a selection is made for an important undertaking, the selectees must be capable in all respects for the responsibility placed on them. They must concentrate fully on the duties assigned to them. *Jihad*, in particular, is not possible without whole-hearted dedication. Sayyidina Yusha' bin Noon عليه السلام had, therefore, barred such people from participation in *jihad* as had other things on mind and so could not be expected to give exclusive attention to *jihad*.

3. This story tells us also that a commander of the forces must keep himself aware of the psychology of his warriors and their temperament. It is necessary for him to adopt such means as will encourage his men to be firm-footed on the battle field and fight

with concentration. This is what Sayyidina Yusha' عليه السلام did. He did not include those people in his army who were liable to be occupied with family and material problems in the midst of the intensity of war and thus have a bad effect on the morale of the whole army.

4. It is part of the blessings of *jihad* that Allah displays His unbelievable Powers whereby He helps His Messengers achieve their aim. We have seen that He answered the supplication of Sayyidina Yusha' عليه السلام and suspended the solar movement to extend hours of daylight. This was, without doubt, the miracle of Sayyidina Yusha' عليه السلام and a great blessing of *jihad.* The army was thus enabled to gain victory during the day.

Similarly, it was a miracle at the hands of Prophet Yusha' عليه السلام and a blessing of *jihad* that those who had misappropriated the spoils of war were traced out when Allah revealed to him that they belonged to the tribe of the man with whom he shook hands.

5. The *Hadith* also discloses the immense mercy of Allah for the Muslim *Ummah* when He permits them to use the spoils of war. The spoils are referred to as lawful and pure.

مما غنمتم حلالا طيباه

{What you have taken as spoils of war, such as is lawful and good} (al-Anfal 8:69)

The earlier people were not permitted to use the spoils even though they underwent the rigours of *jihad*.

6. Cheating and misappropriation are the worst of crimes and Allah even witholds the reward of such a great effort as *jihad* if anyone cheats or is mistrustful. This is more marked when spoils of war are involved although cheating is unlawful at all times. It is at its worst in war because there is a share in the booty for every warrior, heir of the martyrs and the Public Treasury, and to cheat is therefore the same as cheating every individual of the nation. The same should apply to state property and cheating in state dealings is a great crime and sin. Hence, those people who misuse the State Exchequer and Public Property fall under this category and are cheaters and mistrustful.

May Allah cause all Muslims to refrain from this sin. *Aameen!*

The Thirteenth Story

Death of Sayyidina Dawood عليه السّلام

First Words

There is no escape from death. It is the most true and undeniable fact before which the greatest tyrant of any era is a picture of helplessness. Death spares no one–not the pious and not the evil, not a Prophet and not his follower, not the rich and not the poor, not the scholar and not the ignorant.

This is the story of the death of a Prophet of Allah, a righteous man, a great king, a leader worth following, who was bestowed with a sweet voice and a pleasing delivery. He was Sayyidina Dawood عليه السّلام. He was the father of another king (and Prophet) Sayyidina Sulayman عليه السّلام. How did the Angel of Death take away his soul? The narrative of the Prophet ﷺ describes to us how this happened.

روى الامام احمد عن أبِيْ هُرَيْرَةَ أنَّ رَسُوْلَ اللّٰه ﷺ قَالَ: كَانَ دَاوُدُ النَّبِيُّ فِيْهِ غَيْرَةٌ شَدِيْدَةٌ، وَكَانَ إِذَا خَرَجَ أُغْلِقَتِ الأَبْوَابُ، فَلَمْ يَدْخُلْ عَلَى أَهْلِهِ أَحَدٌ حَتّٰى يَرْجِعَ.

قَالَ: فَخَرَجَ ذَاتَ يَوْمٍ، وَغُلِّقَتِ الدَّارُ، فَأَقْبَلَتِ امْرَأَتُهُ تَطَّلِعُ إِلَى الدَّارِ، فَإِذَا رَجُلٌ قَائِمٌ وَسَطَ الدَّارِ، فَقَالَتْ لِمَنْ فِيْ الْبَيْتِ: مِنْ أَيْنَ دَخَلَ هٰذَا الرَّجُلُ الدَّارَ، وَالدَّارُ مُغْلَقَةٌ؟ وَاللّٰهِ لَتُفْتَضَحُنَّ بِدَاوُدَ.

فَجَاءَ دَاوُدُ: فَإِذَا الرَّجُلُ قَائِمٌ وَسَطَ الدَّارِ، فَقَالَ لَهُ دَاوُدُ: مَنْ أَنْتَ؟ قَالَ: أَنَا الَّذِيْ لَا أَهَابُ الْمُلُوكَ، وَلَا يَمْتَنِعُ مِنِّيْ شَيْءٌ. فَقَالَ دَاوُدُ: أَنْتَ وَاللّٰه

مَلَكُ الْمَوْتِ، فَمَرْحَبًا بِأَمْرِ اللّٰه، فَرَمَلَ دَاوُدُ مَكَانَهُ حَيْثُ قَبِضَتْ رُوْحُهُ، حَتّٰى فَرَغَ مِنْ شَأْنِهِ، وَطَلَعَتْ عَلَيْهِ الشَّمْسُ.

فَقَالَ سُلَيْمَانُ لِلطَّيْرِ: أَظِلِّيْ عَلَى دَاوُدَ، فَأَظَلَّتْ عَلَيْهِ الطَّيْرُ، حَتّٰى أَظْلَمَتْ عَلَيْهِمَا الارْضُ. فَقَالَ لَهَا سُلَيْمَانُ: اقْبِضِيْ جَنَاحًا جَنَاحًا، قَالَ أَبُوْهُرَيْرَةَ يُرِيْنَا رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ ﷺ كَيْفَ فَعَلَتِ الطَّيْرُ وَقُبِضَ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰه ﷺ وَغَلَبَتْ عَلَيْهِ يَوْمَئِذٍ الْمَضْرَحِيَّةُ.

Translation

[Imam Ahmad has transmitted in his *masnad* the saying of the Holy Prophet ﷺ as narrated by Abu Hurayrah رضی الله عنه.

The Prophet of Allah, Sayyidina Dawood عليه السّلام possessed a great sense of modesty. So when he went out, he locked the door behind him in order that nobody could enter his house until he returned.

One day he went out and locked the door (as usual). Suddenly, his wife observed a man in the middle of the house. She said to those in the house, "From where did this man enter the house while it is locked. By Allah, Dawood will feel very bad about it."

When Dawood came back, he found the man standing in the middle of the house and asked him, "Who are you?"

He said, "I am he who does not fear any king and no obstacle can bar me."

Dawood said, "So, by Allah! You are the angel of death, surely. Welcome to the command of Allah!"

Sayyidina Dawood عليه السّلام was bathed and shrouded at the very place where his soul was taken out. And when they had finished (washing and shrouding him), the sun rose shining. So, sulayman said to the birds, "Shade Dawood." And they cast their shadows over him until the land became pitch dark for them. So Sulayman عليه السّلام again commanded every bird to contract one (of its pair of) wings.

Abu Hurayrah رضی الله عنه then said that the Prophet ﷺ showed them with his hands how the birds contracted their wings.] (Imam Ahmad, 2/419. Majma' az-Zawa'id 8/207.)

Explanation

This *Hadith* describes the death of Sayyidina Dawood عليه السلام. He was one of those determined and prominent Prophets of Allah who enjoyed choice favours and bounties of Allah. The fourth heavenly Book, the *Zaboor*, was revealed to him. Thus, he was a Prophet who was given a distinct *Shari'ah*. Besides, Allah gave him the distinction of continuity of Prophethood in his son, Sulayman عليه السلام. In addition to Prophethood, Allah bestowed on him unique bounties which are mentioned in the Qur'an.

ولقد أتينا داود منا فضلا يا جبال اوّبى معه والطير والنّا له الحديده

{And certainly We gave to Dawood bounty from Us (and said), "O mountains, repeat Our praises with him, and the birds you too." And We softened for him iron.} (Saba', 34: 10)

In addition to being bestowed the Prophethood, he was given excellence in worldly matters too. Mountains were subjected to his command and whenever he engaged in remembrance of Allah and recital of the *Zaboor* the mountains joined him in *Zikr*.

The birds were under the same command. Hence, they too chanted the praise of Allah with him. These were the miracles of Sayyidina Dawood عليه السلام.

Also, Allah softened iron for him. The hardest piece of iron became soft like wax in his hands so that he could mould it into any form he wished. He was taught to make the chain armour and he had such a beautiful voice that when he recited the *Zaboor* the birds stopped to listen. He was also given rule and authority over land. In short, he was made into a perfect man.

He was gifted with a tremendous sense of modesty and could not tolerate anyone looking at the female members of his family. So, whenever he went out of his house, he locked it from the outside so that no one may enter it.

One day, he left his home as usual locking it behind him but his wife encountered a stranger inside and worried who he was and how Prophet Dawood عليه السلام would be disappointed with it.

While she was yet contemplating the offensive situation, Sayyidina Dawood عليه السلام returned to his house and ran into the intruder in the midst of his home and he demanded to know who he was and why he had come. The reply was prompt, "I fear no king

and am not precluded by any barrier."

The Prophet understood that the angel of death had come to him in human form to take his soul. So. he said quickly. "Indeed, you are the angel of death for no one else can have those qualities. Welcome! Your coming is auspicious so fulfil the command of Allah." Then, after a while, the angel of death took away the soul of the Prophet.

When he died, his son Sayyidina Sulayman عليه السلام (who too was a Prophet and held authority over birds just as he did over mankind) commanded the birds to cast a shadow over Sayyidina Dawood عليه السلام with their wings so that the washing and burial may be performed without strain. The birds spread their wings and hid the sun from the earth so that there was extreme darkness over the land.

Lesson and Messages

This is a summary of what we learn from this *Hadith.*

1. The *Hadith* recounts the privilege Prophet Dawood عليه السلام enjoys among the Prophets. Just as Allah had bestowed on him His special favour in life so too He favoured him in a special way in death.

2. The *Hadith* tells us of his extreme attitude of decency. This attitude is part of faith and is a praiseworthy character if it is within the limits of *Shari'ah.* For instance, a false sense of modesty that incites murder is not allowed in *Shari'ah.* The following *Hadith* in Sahih Muslim elucidates this point.

Uwaimir Al-Ajlani requested Asim bin Adi Al-Ansari to ask the Messenger of Allah ﷺ whether a man should kill him whom he finds with his wife......(Muslim, Book of Divorce, Hadith # 3553)

This *Hadith* is evidence that *Shari'ah* looks down upon killing on the pretext of a sense of honour if it is because of suspicion as is common among the tribal people today. If they find even a little breach on their sense of honour, they are prepared to kill, and are not satisfied with anything less than that.

If anyone kills a man after having seen him with his wife then the question arises, "Should he be killed in retaliation?" The majority of the *Ulama* hold that if he presents four witnesses to back his accusation then he cannot be killed in revenge.

Nevertheless, it is not proper to kill anyone on a petty issue without verifying it, simply to uphold one's sense of honour. However, it is very shameful to tolerate immodesty and exposure in which almost all of our society is deeply involved.

So, Sayyidina Dawood عليه السّلام had a very strong sense of honour and modesty and he kept himself within the limits of *Shari'ah* and his behaviour was praiseworthy. The Holy Prophet ﷺ once let Sayyidina Sa'd bin 'Ubadah رضى الله عنه know on his enquiry:

> "I am more jealous of my honour than all of you and Allah is more jealous than I."

The words in another version are:

> "Are you surprised at Sa'd's jealousy of his honour? By Allah, I am more jealous of my honour than he, and Allah is more jealous than I. Because of His jealousy, Allah has prohibited abomination, both open and secret." (Muslim *Hadith* # 3572)

3. This *Hadith* tells us that angels do appear in human form as indeed Izra'il عليه السّلام visited the house of Sayyidina Dawood عليه السّلام in human appearance.

4. Sayyidina Sulayman عليه السّلام had amazing authority not only over men but also over animals and birds.

5. The *Hadith* also teaches us to respect dead bodies. It is not allowed to cause hardship to the bodies. Just as a living person is inconvenienced by certain things so too a dead body should be protected from these things. Sayyidina Sulayman عليه السّلام had commanded the birds to throw their shade over the body of Sayyidina Dawood عليه السّلام and protect it from the heat of the sun.

It is wrong to suppose that a person is not subject to heat, cold, and the like after death. And, it is sinful to let bodies suffer such inconveniences.

But Allah knows best!

The Fourteenth Story

Policy also depends on Divine Predetermination

First words

Man generally keeps his eyes on the means and measures available to him. Often, it is on the strength of these that he makes tall claims but he is unaware of the fact that these agencies will build for him only castles in air if Divine Will does not agree with him.

The Prophets عليهم السلام know this. They regard all their deeds and excellences as Divine grants and hold all their actions and policies as dependant on Divine Will. In fact, religion also teaches us to hold our actions dependant on the Will of Allah and express this belief through the brief statement *Insha Allah* (If Allah Wills). These are two words but they are exhaustive in meaning. Without the help of Allah, all our means and agencies are meaningless, 'flying dust'!

The great Prophet of Allah, Sayyidina Sulayman عليه السلام did not say *Insha Allah* on an occasion. The chief of the two worlds, Sayyidina Muhammad ﷺ, spoke a word of caution about this ommision.

روى هَذا الحديث البخارى ومسلم في صحيحيهما، عَنْ أَبِيْ هُرَيْرَةَ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ: قَالَ سُلَيْمَانُ ابْنُ دَاوُدَ: لأَطُوْفَنَّ اللَّيْلَةَ عَلَى سَبْعِيْنَ امْرَأَةً تَحْمِلُ كُلُّ امْرَأَةٍ فَارِسًا يُجَاهِدُ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰه: فَقَالَ لَهُ صَاحِبُهُ: إِنْ شَاءَ اللّٰه، فَلَمْ يَقُلْ، وَلَمْ تَحْمِلْ شَيْئًا إِلا وَاحِدًا سَاقِطًا أَحَدُ شِقَّيْهِ.

فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ: لَوْ قَالَهَا لَجَاهَدُوا فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰه قَالَ شُعَيْبٌ وَابْنُ أَبِيْ الزِّنَادِ (تِسْعِيْنَ) وَهُوَ أَصَحُّ، والسياق للبخاري، وأورده البخاري فِي كتاب

الجهاد بلفظ: لأطوفن الليلة على مائة امرأة، أو تسع وتسعين امرأة.

وفي كتاب النكاح بلفظ قَالَ سُلَيْمَانُ بْنُ دَاوُدَ عَلَيْهِمَا السّلام: لأطُوفَنَّ اللَّيْلَةَ بِمِائَةِ امْرَأَةٍ، تَلِدُ كُلُّ امْرَأَةٍ غُلامًا يُقَاتِلُ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰه، فَقَالَ لَهُ الْمَلَكُ: قُلْ إِنْ شَاءَ اللّٰه، فَلَمْ يَقُلْ، وَنَسِيَ، فَأَطَافَ بِهِنَّ، وَلَمْ تَلِدْ مِنْهُنَّ إِلا امْرَأَةٌ نِصْفَ إِنْسَانٍ. قَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ لَوْ قَالَ إِنْ شَاءَ اللّٰه لَمْ يَحْنَثْ وَكَانَ أَرْجَى لِحَاجَتِهِ.

Translation

[Imam Bukhari has transmitted a *Hadith* narrated by Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه that the Prophet ﷺ said, "Sulayman the son of Dawood said, 'Tonight I will sleep with seventy ladies each of whom will conceive a child who will be a warrior on horseback fighting in Allah's Way.' His Companion (the angel) said to him, 'Say: *Insha Allah*!' But he did not say so. Therefore, none of those women got pregnant except one who gave birth to a half child." The Prophet ﷺ said further, "If Prophet Sulayman had said it (Insha Allah), he would have begotten children who would have fought in the cause of Allah."

Shu'ayb and Ibn Abu Az-Zinad said, 'Ninety (women) is more correct'.)

(In the *Book of Jihad*, Bukhari has transmitted the *Hadith* with the words 'I will have sexual intercourse with one hundred or ninety-nine women'.)

Another version in Bukhari says:

[Sulayman son of Dawood said, "Tonight I will go round one hundred women (my wives), everyone of whom will give birth to a male child who will fight in Allah's cause." On that an angel said to him, "Say, If Allah Will." But Sulayman did not say it and forgot to say it. Then he had sexual relations with them but none of them gave birth to any child except one who gave birth to a half child. The Prophet ﷺ said, "If Sulayman had said *Insha Allah,* Allah would have fulfilled his (above) desire and that saying would have made him more hopeful."]

(Bukhari, *Hadith* # 3424, {2819}, 5242. Also, 6639, 6720 and 7469)

Explanation

Sayyidina Sulayman عليه السّلام was one of the great Prophets of Allah and He had bestowed on him significant favours. These favours included: Prophethood, noble descent, son of a Prophet, large kingdom, exclusive sovereignty, authority over mankind, *jinn*, beast, birds and insects, authority over wind, knowledge of the language of birds. In fact, he was blessed with untold, unique favours.

Along with these blessings and large kingdom, he was a warrior in the way of Allah. To wage *jihad* for the sake of Allah was very dear to him. Everyone who studies the Qur'an with concentration will see how passionately he loved to fight in the way of Allah.

It was this love of *jihad* that kept his mind occupied on how to thank Allah and add to the number of warriors in His cause. He was constantly engaged in *jihad*.

He prepared an army of birds, a force of beasts and troops of human beings. The Qur'an says:

وَحُشِرَ لِسُلَيْمَانَ جُنُوْدُهٗ مِنَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنْسِ وَالطَّيْرِ فَهُمْ يُوْزَعُوْنَ○

{And there were gathered for Sulayman his hosts of the *jinn* and mankind, and the birds, and they were set in bands.} (An-Name, 27: 17)

He kept his horses ready and fit:

إِذْ عُرِضَ عَلَيْهِ بِالْعَشِيِّ الصّٰفِنٰتُ الْجِيَادُ○

{(Recall) when there were presented to him in the evening, standing steeds, swift-footed.} (Sad, 38: 31)

Thus, Sayyidina Sulayman عليه السّلام was a *mujahid* who kept himself occupied in *jihad*. It was his love for *jihad* that prompted him one day to vow that he would have intimate relationship that very night with his seventy of his wives and bondwomen (according to other versions, ninety or a hundred of them). He asserted that each of them will conceive and deliver a male offspring who will grow up to fight in the way of Allah as a cavalier. In this way, a large number of warriors will be born of one night.

However, every policy and plan depends on the Will of Allah and the predetermined fate and it is necessary for man to adopt means and agencies and then leave the result to Allah's Will; he must

say *Insha Allah.* He must not depend merely on his means and strength or overlook the will of Allah. It happens sometimes that Allah causes His close slaves to act against the preferred way, and there is much wisdom in it one of which is that the *Ummah* is taught in this way.

Sayyidina Sulayman عليه السّلام forgot to let his policy and its fulfilment be subject to the Will of Allah, or the devil made him forget it. Although the angel reminded him, he fcorgot to say *Insha Allah.* The result was that although he had sexual intercourse with his wives and bondwomen, none of them conceived except one who too gave birth to an imperfect child.

Thus, Allah reminded him that nothing may be done without His Will. Of course, we cannot say at all that Prophet Sulayman عليه السّلام had turned away from Allah and relied on his own effort. He certainly had it on his mind that Allah determines what will happen and what not.. Only, he had forgotten to say *Insha Allah* verbally.

The Prophet ﷺ said that if he had said *Insha Allah*, his vow would have been fulfilled and he would not have been disappointed.

The Qur'an also teaches us to say *Insha Allah* before forming an intention to do something in the future, making it subservient to the Will of Allah.

In fact, it happened with the Holy Prophet ﷺ too when the idolators were prompted by the jews to ask him about the dwellers of the cave. He promised them that he would inform them the next day on the hope that Jibril عليه السّلام will bring a revelation and inform him about it, and he forgot to say *Insha Allah.*

Jibril عليه السّلام did not come the next day. Rather, he did not turn up for the next fifteen days. The Holy Prophet ﷺ was much grieved about it and the idolators and the Jews made fun of him. Jibril عليه السّلام came after fifteen days and the first command that he brought was:

وَلَا تَقُوْلَنَّ لِشَىْءٍ إِنِّىْ فَاعِلٌ ذَالِكَ غَدًا إِلَّآ اَنْ يَّشَآءَ اللّٰهُ٥

{And say not of anything, "I am going to do that tomorrow", except (by adding) "if Allah Will!"} (Al-Kahf, 18:23,24)

That is, do not promise to do anything without making it conditional to Allah's Will. (Tafsir Usmani)

It is very important, therefore, to say *Insha Allah* and every Muslim must observe it. We must not take these words to be

customary but must repeat them with their full implication in our minds. The heart too must turn towards the Real Doer alongwith the tongue, (and He is Allah).

Important Observations

It is necessary to bear in mind certain things to be able to understand this *Hadith*.

1. The first thing we must know is that the *Shari'ah* of Musa عليه السلام did not limit the number of wives to four as the *Shari'ah* of Muhammad ﷺ has done. Those people could have innumerable wives. Besides, Sayyidina Sulayman عليه السلام had bondwomen too for, he was a warrior and warriors got them in addition to the spoils. Thus if anyone feels why he had so many wives this explanation should ward off his doubt.

2. The second thing is that Sulayman عليه السلام vowed confidently about something in the future. On the face of it, it is contrary to the station of a great Prophet to make such a claim especially if such a thing was not within his powers. But, we must remember that some of Allah's slaves are very close to Him and Allah fulfills their vows because of the close station they enjoy. It is stated in a *Hadith* that there are some slaves of Allah whose saying Allah does not reject and He fulfills their vows. The case of Sayyidina Bara' bin Malik رضى الله عنه is well known in *Hadith*.

Surely, Sayyidina Sulayman عليه السلام was also among the closest slaves of Allah. Accordingly, his claim and assertion was on this basis alone. However, Allah had to teach a lesson so He did not fulfil his claim and vow.

Lessons and Messages

There are many lessons for the thinkers in this event of Sayyidina Sulayman bin Dawood عليه السلام.

1. Whatever intention we form and determination we make to perform something in the future, we must qualify our intention and our statement with *Insha Allah*. This is because the intention and determination of man has no reality before the Perfect Power of Allah. Sayyidina Ali رضى الله عنه exclaimed of a sudden:

عرفت ربى بفسخ العزائم.

"I recognised my Lord in the failing of my resolves."

2. A Believer should be prepared always to undertake *jihad* as Prophet Sulayman عليه السلام was prepared. He was also wishing to have more warriors and planned to have more sons for that purpose. The preparations for *jihad* may be made in any manner.

3. The vow and desire of Sayyidina Sulayman عليه السلام also tell us that a Believer must desire and try to have pious children who would serve the religion of Allah. He must wish that Allah grant him children who would serve His religion.

4. This narrative also proves that Sayyidina Sulayman عليه السلام had extraordinary manly power for an ordinary man cannot be expected to have sexual intercourse even three or four times. It is true that Allah grants His Prophets عليه السلام strength equal to that of a male dweller of Paradise who will possess seventy times the strength of a strong man of earth.

5. Apart from that, it is a miracle of Prophet Sulayman عليه السلام even in terms of the time available to him. He could sleep with seventy (or ninety or a hundred) women and go through his normal rota of worship in one night. It is impossible for an ordinary man to imagine it even in terms of time available.

6. It is *mustahabb* to form the intention at the time of having intercourse with one's wife that Allah grant them pious children through it.

7. When speaking of these things where the very intimate relationship is concerned, one should merely allude to them or speak in a figurative maner and avoid direct, clear reference.

Sulayman عليه السلام did not say that he would have intercourse that night with better women but he said that he would go to seventy women that night. He did not use the exact words and that is the recommended and the proper way.

However, if a religious point has to be explained then it is allowed to use the exact words. We find examples of this in the *Ahadith* and juristic rulings.

8. If anyone vows about something concerning the future and says *Insha Allah* too then he will not be a purjure as is evident from the saying of the Prophet ﷺ.

9. Allah displays His perfect power and ability both by creating

normal human beings and, sometimes, abnormal or incomplete human beings. The birth of an abnormal child is a sign of Allah's power and ability but it may also be the result of a wrong deed by the parents.

The foregoing case of Sayyidina Sulayman عليه السّلام is an example of that. Thus, if an abnormal child is born to anyone, instead of complaing they must rectify their misdeed.

10. The *Hadith* also reveals to us that the angels too remind the Prophets عليهم السّلام of what they should do. Just as the devil makes one forget many things, the angels remind of many forgotten things.

Sayyidina Sulayman عليه السّلام forgot to say *Insha Allah* (if Allah Wills) and the angel reminded him to say that. It is a different thing that he forgot to say it in spite of that reminder: تلك عشرة كاملة (There are ten in all!)

The Fifteenth Story

A Just Decision

First Words

At the same time as bestowing Prophethood on them Allah appoints His Prophets as guides for their *Ummah* in all their affairs. They also judge in the disputes of their people and met out jsutice which is indeed the backbone of any society. A society is based on injustice, oppression and inequality and although it may seem a strong base yet it cannot be durable and long lasting.

The Prophets عليهم السّلام create a society free from oppression and based on justice. Their judgements are intelligent and are based on the spiritual foresight bestowed on them by Allah.

It is about one such intelligent judgement based on spiritual foresight that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has spoken.

عَنْ أَبِيْ هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ رَسُوْلَ اللّٰهِ ﷺ قَالَ: كَانَتِ امْرَأَتَانِ مَعَهُمَا ابْنَاهُمَا جَاءَ الذِّئْبُ فَذَهَبَ بِإِبْنِ إِحْدَاهُمَا، فَقَالَتْ لِصَاحِبَتِهَا: إِنَّمَا ذَهَبَ بِإِبْنِكِ، وَقَالَتِ الأُخْرَى: إِنَّمَا ذَهَبَ بِإِبْنِكِ، فَتَحَاكَمَتَا إِلَى دَاوُدَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلام فَقَضَى بِهِ لِلْكُبْرٰى فَخَرَجَتَا عَلَى سُلَيْمَان بْنِ دَاوُدَ عَلَيْهِمَا السَّلام فَأَخْبَرَتَاهُ، فَقَالَ: ائْتُونِيْ بِالسِّكِّيْنِ أَشُقُّهُ بَيْنَهُمَا. فَقَالَتِ الصُّغْرَى: لا تَفْعَلْ يَرْحَمُكَ اللّٰه، هُوَ ابْنُهَا، فَقَضَى بِهِ لِلصُّغْرَى.

قَالَ أَبُوْ هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللّٰه عَنْهُ: وَاللّٰه إِنْ سَمِعْتُ بِالسِّكِّيْنِ قَطُّ إِلا يَوْمَئِذٍ، وَمَا كُنَّا نَقُوْلُ إِلا الْمُدْيَةَ.

Translation

[Sayyidina Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه siad that he heard the

Messenger of Allah ﷺ say, "There were two women, each of whom had a child with her. A wolf came and took away the child of one of them, whereupon each said to the other, 'It has taken your child'. So, they both carried the case before Dawood عليه السّلام who judged that the living child be given to the elder lady. So, both of them went to Sulayman عليه السّلام the son of Dawood عليه السّلام and informed him (of the case). He said, 'Bring me a knife so as to cut the child into two pieces and distribute it between them'. The younger lady exclaimed, 'May Allah be Merciful to you! Don't do that, for it is her (the elder's) child'. So, he gave the child to the younger lady."

(The Prophet had used the word *sikkeen* for the knife and) Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه said, "By Allah! I had never heard the word *sikkeen* before it. Until then we used the word *numdyah* for a knife."] (Bukhari, *Hadith* # 3427 (& 6769), Muslim, and Nasa'i.)

Explanation

This incident took place in the times of the Prophet of Allah, Sayyidina Dawood عليه السّلام. Two women had brought before him a case. A wolf had taken away the child of one of them and she claimed the child of the other as her own. Although she knew that her child was the one whom the wolf had taken away she disputed that the wolf had not taken her child but the other's. The other tried her best to explain it to her but she refused to see reason and that is why they brought their case to Sayyidina Dawood عليه السّلام.

Prophet Dawood عليه السّلام weighed their arguments and used his judgement to decide in favour of the elder of the two women. (The facts were contrary to his judgement but a judge looks at the case and considers the arguments of the two parties. His judgement is sincere and honest. However, sometimes, one of the parties presents false testimony and misleads the judge on the basis of the arguments presented to him.

Naturally, the younger woman was dissatisfied with the judgement (and the child was really hers). The case was thus brought before Sayyidina Sulayman عليه السّلام the son of Sayyidina Dawood عليه السّلام. He was told of the nature of the case and the judgement of his father.

He realised that the judgement was faulty. So, he adopted a novel method of arriving at the conclusion which was very effective. He asked one of his attendants to bring him a knife so that he may bisect the child and hand over one piece each to the women. Their dispute would thus end.

Obviously, this was a psychological ploy and he had no plans to actually execute his judgement. His trick paid off. He had hardly pronounced his decision when the younger woman burst out, "Do not do that! May Allah show mercy to you! This child is hers, (not mine)." She may have known that Prophet Sulayman عليه السّلام would not do it and, indeed, could not do such a thing; yet, she blurted promptly and withdrew her claim to protect the child. Her plea was enough evidence in her favour and it proved that she was the real mother of the child for only a mother can express such feelings for her child and would resign herself to see it in the possession of another than being killed. The other woman did not say anything all this while, and this was a disclosure of her lack of love for the child.

The psychological approach of Sayyidina Sulayman عليه السّلام paid off and he found out the truth. The child belonged to the younger woman and the elder was a false claimant. So, he decided in favour of the younger woman.

After having narrated the incident, Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه asserted that he had heard the word *sikkeen* for the first time and had only known *mudyah* to mean a knife.

Lessons and Messages

This *Hadith* imparts to us many lessons. The jurists have drawn quite a number of principles from it and a detailed account of it may be found in books of jurisprudence and *Hadith*. It is not the proper place to mention them in this book. We will state only some of them here.

1. This story reveals a very high degree of sagacity and foresight with which Sayyidina Sulayman عليه السّلام judged. He possessed much wisdom and was very judicious. The Qur'an has spoken of his excellence and outstanding nature in relation to another incident.

فَفَهَّمْنٰهَا سُلَيْمٰنَ وَكُلًّا اٰتَيْنَا حُكْمًا وَّعِلْمًا

{So We made Sulayman to understand it. And to each (of the two) We gave judgement and knowledge.} (Al-Ambiya.21:78)

2. It is not enough to consider the testimonies alone in arriving at a decision in any dispute. The judge has to observe the behaviour of the parties and examine them psychologically. He should try to investigate the matter deeply and find out the truth so that he may arrive at a just conclusion. This is why a judge is appointed not merely on the basis of his knowledge but his intelligence, foresight and ability to sift testimonies is also considered. Only then can people get true justice.

3. This case also proves that a judge may employ a psychological ploy to arrive at a conclusion. Sayyidina Sulayman عليه السلام did exactly that and was able to pin point the real mother thereby. The sentiments of the real mother came out in the open while the behaviour of the other woman belied her claim and disclosed her falsehood. A guilty person speaks out by his own conduct.

4. The judgement also proves that one judge may rescind or overrule the decision of another judge if justice has not been done by him. Sayyidina Sulayman عليه السلام repealed the judgement of Sayyidina Dawood عليه السلام who was not only his father but also a Prophet.

Imam Nasa'i has cited this *Hadith* to rule that one judge may abrogate the judgement passed by another judge provided he is his peer in knowledge, excellence, piety and perfection.

This speaks well too for the legal procedure of our times in which a senior court may set aside the judgement of a lower court. For instance, the Supreme court may amend, repeal or set aside the judgement passed by the High court.

5. If a case is complicated and there is doubt in statements, and arguments are inconclusive and testimonies are unhelpful, the judge must try to come to a conclusion through circumstantial evidences and outward indications. Sayyidina Sulayman عليه السلام had done exactly that.

6. If a judge or jurist, having done his best, cannot dig out the truth and errs in his judgement then he is not to be blamed but, in fact, he is entitled to reward for his sincere efforts. Of course, his

reward will be two-fold if he decides correctly while if his decision is incorrect then he will get only one reward for his effort.

7. This case also proves that the Prophets عليهم السلام generally decided on their personal interpretation, not on the basis of revelation from Allah. If they had based their judgements on divine revelation the pronouncements of Dawood عليه السلام and Sulayman عليه السلام would not have been different. This is why sometimes the decisions of the Prophets عليهم السلام were in favour of a wrong person as some *Ahadith* speak about the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself passing such judgements.

However, when there was an absolute doubt, Allah revealed the facts to His Prophets عليهم السلام through revelation.

8. This also tells us that the noble Prophets عليهم السلام are not *Knowers of the unseen.* If they had known the unseen, Sayyidina Dawood عليه السلام would not have passed the judgement that he did and we would not have heard of such judgements by the Holy Prophet himself ﷺ.

9. Intelligence, juristic ability and foresight are not tied down to age. Sometimes a young person is able to reach to the depths of an issue but elders are unable to fathom its complexities. However, this does not imply that they are deficient in any way for it is Allah's wisdom that He gives to whom He will.

ذَالِكَ فَضْلُ اللّٰهِ يُؤْتِيْهِ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ

{That is Allah's bounty, He gives it to whom He Will.}
(At-Ma'idah, 5:54)

Sayyidina Sulayman عليه السلام was young and the son while Sayyidina Dawood عليه السلام was his father and the elder but Sulayman عليه السلام was afforded the strong ability to reach to the truth. There are many other examples of this.

10. The gist of this story and the main lesson is as follows:

i) The society which the noble Prophets عليهم السلام promote has justice as its main feature. The oppressed is given justice, for justice and fairness alone determines whether a civilised society is praiseworthy or condemned.

ii) The *Shari'ah* of Islam holds justice and fair treatment as most significant part of social living. It is the soul of Islamic society. But Allah knows best. (Then is ten in all!) تلك عشرة كاملة.

The Sixteenth Story

Even Though It was an Ant....

First Words

To antagonise anyone or to take revenge on him are traits that Allah does not like, more so if it is against a speechless animal. Allah has prohibited us to make mischief on the land. And it is detestable to cut down trees and plants and to harm mute animals. On the Day of Resurrection a man will be questioned even about the bird that he killed for no reason. So why should one not be asked about burning an innocent and harmless ant, particularly if the perpetrator is one of those slaves who are close to Allah.... Such an act is liable to earn the displeasure of Allah. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has narrated to us the incident of a Prophet burning down a whole colony of ants became the cause of Allah's wrath.

روى البخارى عن أبي هريرة رضى الله عنه أنَّ رَسُولَ اللّٰه ﷺ قَالَ: نَزَلَ نَبِيٌّ مِنَ الأَنْبِيَاءِ تَحْتَ شَجَرَةٍ، فَلَدَغَتْهُ نَمْلَةٌ، فَأَمَرَ بِجَهَازِهِ فَأُخْرِجَ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا، ثُمَّ أَمَرَ بِبَيْتِهَا فَأُحْرِقَ بِالنَّارِ، فَأَوْحَى اللّٰه إِلَيْهِ: فَهَلا نَمْلَةً وَّاحِدَةً.

وَفِي رِوَايَةٍ عِنْدَ مُسْلِم عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ: أَنَّ نَمْلَةً قَرَصَتْ نَبِيًّا مِّنَ الأَنْبِيَاء، فَأَمَرَ بِقَرْيَةِ النَّمْلِ فَأُحْرِقَتْ، فَأَوْحَى اللّٰه إِلَيْهِ: أَفِي أَنْ قَرَصَتْكَ نَمْلَةٌ أَهْلَكْتَ أُمَّةً مِّنَ الأُمَمِ تُسَبِّحُ.

Translation

[Imam Bukhari has transmitted a *Hadith* narrated by Abu Hurayrah رضی الله عنه. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Once while a Prophet amongst the Prophets was taking a rest underneath a tree, an ant bit him. He, therefore, ordered that his

luggage be taken away from underneath that tree and then ordered that the dwelling place of the ants should be set on fire. Allah sent him a revelation, "Wouldn't it have been enough to burn a single ant (that bit you)?"]

The version in Sahih Muslim as narrated by Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه is:

[The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "An ant had bitten a Prophet among the Prophets and he ordered that the colony of ants should be burnt. And Allah revealed to him, "Because of an ant's bite you have burnt a community from amongst the communities which sing My glory."](Bukhari#3319. Muslim#5567)

Explanation

The Prophets عليهم السّلام are also human beings like any other man. They have the same human idiosyncrasies as any other man. Like all human beings they are displeased on being hurt and they get angry. This is what happened to the Prophet ﷺ told us.

Perhaps he was on a journey and had stopped somewhere to rest under a tree. There was a burrow of the ants under the tree for an ant never lives alone but lives in a colony of ants. If anyone disturbs it at its burrow, it bites him and gives vent to its anger.

Thus, when the Prophet sat there he became the target of the ant. He did not like that and decided to punish the ant. He had placed his luggage under the tree which he ordered to be moved away from there and the entire burrow of the ants was burned down. Hundreds of ants were burnt because of that.

Allah was displeased with this act of the Prophet and He let him know through revelation that He was angry. "If you had to seek vengeance then you should have punished the one ant that had bitten you. How is it that just because one ant caused you inconvenience you destroyed the whole community that was glorifying Me?"

Justice demanded that the innocent should not be punished for the sin of the culprit. Besides, this behaviour was not consonant with the character of men of Allah.

Lessons and Messages

This incident imparts to us many lessons:

1. It is not allowed to kill ants unnecessarily. However, if an ant bites anyone then he may kill it but it is wrong to harm it without any reason. The same applies to other harmless and innocent animals.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ is quoted in a *Hadith* as having said about four animals which should not be killed. These four creatures are: ants, bees, hoopoes and sparrow-hawks. (Abu Dawood)

Nevertheless, it is allowed to kill the harmful creatures like snakes, scorpions, etc. In a *Hadith*, five animals are mentioned whom it is allowed to kill within and outside the Haram.

2. It is absolutely improper to burn any living creature in fire. The *Shari'ah* of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ has prohibited it in clear terms. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has mentioned the reason for that, "The punishment of the fire may be given only by the Lord of the fire." Maybe it was permitted to earlier people.

3. It is not allowed to kill an inocent person against the sin committed by someone else. Only he should be punished who has committed the crime. Allah showed His displeasure to His Prophet by saying, "Why did you not kill only one ant? What was the wisdom in taking revenge from all of them?"

4. Even the ants glorify and sanctify Allah. Allah has said in the Qur'an:

وَإِن مِّن شَيْءٍ إِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهِ وَلَٰكِن لَّا تَفْقَهُونَ تَسْبِيحَهُمْ ۝

{And there is not a thing but glorifies Him with His praise but you understand not their glorification.} (Al-Isra, 17:44)

5. We also learn from this that it is not approved that anyone who glorifies Allah should be killed because, if he is spared, he will go on praising and glorifying Allah as long as he lives.

6. The ants are also a whole community. Of the numerous communities of Allah, ants are a separate community.

Zoologists tell us that this very tiny creature is very similar to mankind in its social life and political administration. The ants also have their families and tribes. They are driven by a mutual spirit of cooperation, division of labour and departments of government–all

of which are similar to human social life. European researchers have studied them very closely by living near their large colonies and gained valuable information. (Tafsir Usmani)

We quote from the *Da'irah Al-Ma'arifah Al-Misriyah*:

"If an enemy moves towards their colonies, all the ants stop working and turn out to tackle him.... One of them goes ahead to reconnoiter enemy position and reports back its findings to the main body. After a while, three or four ants march forward followed by the whole army.... They bite the enemy and sting all of them." (Da'irah Al-Ma'arif Al-Misr as referred in Tafsir Usmani)

In short, although the ant is a tiny insect yet, in fact, it is very intelligent and a creature that plans–a strategist. The ants are a community by itself. And not only they but all animals, birds and insects–all living creatures of Allah–are individual communities.

Allah has made it clear in the Qur'an:

وَمَا مِنْ دَآبَّةٍ فِى الْاَرْضِ وَلَا طَآئِرٍ يَّطِيْرُ بِجَنَاحَيْهِ اِلَّآ اُمَمٌ اَمْثَالُكُمْ ۝

{And there is not an animal in the earth, not a bird that flies on its two wings, but they are communities like yourselves.} (Al-An'am, 6:38)

All creatures, therefore, are separate communities by themselves. As scholars gain more knowledge about them through research and investigation, the truth of the Qur'an dawns upon us very clearly.

The Seventeenth Story

Who is it that Will Fight Them....

First Words

Every blessing that man enjoys is bestowed on him by Allah. He must be grateful for the blessings and not become proud or feel superior and unique. If anyone becomes proud or has a superiority complex then the blessings are withdrawn from him.

Allah shows singular favour and benovelence to His Prophets عليهم السّلام. The story we are to relate also concerns a Prophet on whom Allah had showered spiritual blessings and worldly favours. He had a very large *Ummah* (following). There were a large number of individuals in his community, a great army was at his command and they had a tremendous fighting spirit.

This Prophet was granted these favours and he was pleased with that. He had a superiority complex because of that and he said, "Who is there that will come against this army and fight my combatants."

This attitude or thought was disapproved. It was a sign that his sight had moved away from the true Benefactor and the real Power. The Prophets عليهم السّلام are very close to Allah, so they are warned promptly on such behaviour. It was Allah's wish that seventy thousand of their numbers were slain in war against the enemy.

Let us read the story as narrated by Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

روى الامام احمد في مسنده عن صهيب قال: كَانَ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰه ﷺ إِذَا صَلَّى هَمَسَ شَيْئًا لا أَفْهَمُهُ، وَلا يُخْبِرُنَـا بِهِ، قَالَ: أَفَطِنْتُمْ لِي؟ قُلْنَا: نَعَمْ، قَالَ: إِنِّيْ ذَكَرْتُ نَبِيًّا مِنَ الأَنْبِيَاءِ أُعْطِيَ جُنُوْدًا مِنْ قَوْمِهِ، (وفي رِوَايَةٍ أُعْجِبَ بِأُمَّتِهِ. فَقَالَ مَنْ يُكَافِيُّ هَؤُلَآءِ؟ أَوْ مَنْ يَقُوْمُ لِهَؤُلَآءِ؟ أَوْ غَيْرَهَا مِنَ الْكَلامِ.

فَأُوْحِيَ إِلَيْهِ أَنِ اخْتَرْ لِقَوْمِكَ إِحْدَى ثَلاثٍ: إِمَّا أَنْ نُسَلِّطَ عَلَيْهِمْ عَدُوًّا مِنْ غَيْرِهِمْ، أَوِ الْجُوْعَ، أَوِالْمَوْتَ، فَاسْتَشَارَ قَوْمَهُ فِي ذَالِكَ، فَقَالُوْا: أَنْتَ نَبِيُّ اللّٰهِ، فَكُلُّ ذَالِكَ إِلَيْكَ، خِرْلَنَا، فَقَامَ إِلَى الصَّلاةِ، وَكَانُوْا إِذَا فَزِعُوْا، فَزِعُوْا إِلَى الصَّلاةِ، فَصَلَّى مَا شَاءَ اللّٰهُ.

قَالَ: ثُمَّ قَالَ: أَيْ رَبِّ، أَمَّا عَدُوٌّ مِنْ غَيْرِهِمْ فَلا، أَوِ الْجُوْعُ، فَلا، وَلَكِنِ الْمَوْتُ، فَسُلِّطَ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَوْتُ، فَمَاتَ مِنْهُمْ سَبْعُوْنَ أَلْفًا، فَهَمْسِي الَّذِيْ تَرَوْنَ أَنِّيْ أَقُوْلُ: اللّٰهُمَّ بِكَ أُقَاتِلُ، وَبِكَ أُصَاوِلُ، وَلا حَوْلَ وَلا قُوَّةَ إِلا بِاللّٰهِ.

Translation

[Imam Ahmad has transmitted in his Masnad the *Hadith* narrated by Suhayb رضى الله عنه. He said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ when he led the *Salat* said something softly which I could not make out and he too did not tell us about that.

He asked us if we wished to know what he said and we confirmed that we did wish to know. He said, "I suddenly remembered a Prophet of the Prophets who was given a large army from his people and he said, 'who can match them?' Or, he said, 'who is there that can survive against them?' Or, he said, something else to the effect.

He received a revelation from Allah. He was told to choose one of three things for his people (on whom he felt proud):

i) Another people should subdue them, or
ii) They should suffer hunger, or
iii) They may be put to death.

He consulted his people about the choice and they told him that he was the Prophet of Allah and he was authorised in every affair and so may select what he chose for them.

The Prophet stood up for *Salat* for it was their habit to stand up in *Salat* whenever they were confronted with a problem. He stood in *Salat* as long as Allah Willed and then made a supplication to Him. He said, 'My Lord! As far as subjecting them to an alien people is concerned, do not do that. Also, do not let the severity of hunger seize them. However, as for death, let it come over them'. So, they were put to death and

seventy thousand men died."

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "The words that I spoke softly and you heard them was that because of this event I made this supplication:

اللّٰهم بك اقاتل وبك اصاول ولاحول ولاقوّة إلا باللّٰه

(O Allah! I fight with Your help. I attack with Your support. And there is no night or power save with Allah.)"] (Tirmizi, Ahmad)

Explanation

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ has narrated the case of a Prophet whom Allah had granted a superior and large man power. One day, he felt elated at the tremendous strength at his command and he thought that his army was invincible. He thought that no one could oppose it and survive before it.

Obviously this thought is displeasing to Allah. It was a Prophet relying on the strength of the created beings and those besides Allah and neglecting the One Who grants this power and is the Owner of that power!

The Prophets عليهم السّلام are made to commit such oversights so that their ranks may be raised for once there is an ommission on their part, they engage themselves in extraordinary repentance and seek forgiveness with deep sincerity. As they continue to be so engaged Allah rewards them with elevated ranks while these minor oversights do not in the least dampen their innocence.

Thus, when the said Prophet happened to do that, he was immediately alerted by Allah. "You are Our Prophet and close to Us but you have turned your sight away from Us although victory is dependant on Our unseen help. It is not dependent on numbers, large or small. Our practice is as follows."

كَمْ مِّنْ فِئَةٍ قَلِيْلَةٍ غَلَبَتْ فِئَةً كَثِيْرَةً بِإِذْنِ اللّٰهِ ۝

{How often a small party has overcome a large party by Allah's leave.} (al-Baqarah, 2:249)

Thus, numbers are not a reliable sign of victory or defeat in His sight. The real thing is belief in Him and supplication to Him. It is most disliked by Him that anyone should rely on his own strength and power. He has said about those who place reliance on their

numbers.

إِذْ أَعْجَبَتْكُمْ كَثْرَتُكُمْ فَلَمْ تُغْنِ عَنكُمْ شَيْئًا وَضَاقَتْ عَلَيْكُمُ الأَرْضُ بِمَا رَحُبَتْ ثُمَّ وَلَّيْتُم مُّدْبِرِينَ ۝

{...when your multitude elated you, but it availed you nothing; and the land, with all its vastness, straitened upon you, then you turned back retreating.} (Al-Tawbah, 9:25)

It is thus imperative that all Muslims particularly the Prophets عليهم السلام keep this in mind. When he rejoiced on his numerical superiority, Allah did not like that and He cautioned him. Allah offered him to choose one of the three kinds of punishment, and enemy may subdue them, hunger may overpower them or death may come over them.

Why were these three options given to him? There could have been other choices. Of course, Allah alone knows best but these three kinds of punishments are such that they weaken the collective strength of the entire people and they are disgracing, that very thing that brought about an impression of superiority in their minds was eliminated by these punishments.

The Prophet selected death from the three options available to him. Why was that? In fact, his choice was prompted to him by Allah. If he had made the selection himself, he might have chosen something else. If an enemy were to overpower and subjugate them then there was much disgrace in that. So, that ws not chosen. There is much hardship in hunger and it causes tremendous weakness which would allow the enemy to overpower them. So, that too was rejected. Death was prefered over the other options because at the hands of others in it, for death is an undeniable conclusion which has to be faced at some time by everyone.

The Prophet then occupied himself in *Salat*. Whenever they were in distress they turned to *Salat* because it is instrumental in focusing the mercy of Allah on the worshipper.

He chose death and Allah decreed that they should die. The shadow of death spread over them until seventy thousand of them died in one day.

Those who died will hopefully become the approved people of Allah. Their ranks will rise for they met death at the command of Allah and the respect of His Prophet.

Those who were spared took a lesson from it and shuned pride all the rest of their lives. As for the reduction in their numbers because of their death, Allah was able to offset the loss if He wished for He has everything in His Hands.

The Prophet ﷺ told his Companions that his whisper which they had heard was in fact his supplication that he made to Allah–And he let them know what it was:

"O Allah! I fight on the strength of Your help. I attack only on the strength of Your help. And there is no might or power save in Allah the High, the Great."

Lessons and Messages

The foregoing narrative contains many lessons for a Muslim.

1. For anyone to consider himself or his people or army as better and superior than other people is a cause of the downfall of his people. This sort of thinking destroys the biggest of nations and the strongest of them because Allah dislikes it most. Whatever advantage a nation has, and its goodness and perfection, is a blessing of Allah. If they are strong, the Strength is bestowed by Allah and if they have superior knowledge that is a blessing from Him. Thus if anyone boasts of his strength or knowledge and considers other nations and people as inferior to them then Allah does not like it at all and that is the point from where the downfall of that people commences. We have seen how a slight thought of superiority in the mind of the Prophet caused them to lose seventy thousand men. So, we must always place our trust and reliance on Allah.

2. It was the habit of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ that he narrated to his Companions رضى الله عنهم such episodes as helped build their character. They were supposed to shoulder great responsibility later on in their lives. They had to run the government, play their part in politics, society and in raising the religion of Islam. The Prophet ﷺ narrated to them the reasons for the rise and fall of nations so that they might think on a proper line and develop the art of administration.

3. This narrative imparts a lesson to the leaders and guides and rulers of nations to summon their followers, fans and subordinates to the path of Allah and shun egoism, pride and arrogance. We have

seen how the Prophet summoned his people to obey Allah.

In our era our leaders, reformers and guides boast about their strength and numbers but they do not care to correct the character, deeds and sayings of their followers. They do not even exhort them to act according to the commands of Allah. Often, the leaders are religious in their private lives but when they are among their fans and followers they toe the line of these people and behave against the teachings of religion lest they lose their support and have a reduced following.

4. The *Hadith* teaches us to stand up in *Salat* whenever we are faced with a distressing or worrying situation. The Prophet of Allah whose story the *Hadith* relates did in fact stand up in *Salat*.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ also is known to have stood up in *Salat* whenever he faced a difficult situation. The Believers have the same command in the Qur'an:

يَآأَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ آمَنُوْا اسْتَعِيْنُوْا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلٰوةِ

{O you who believe! Seek help in perseverance and prayer}
(Al-Baqarah, 2: 153)

We must, therefore, resort to *Salat* and patience when we face an unfavourable situation.

5. It is the responsibility of leaders and guides that they should not take hasty decisions in important national matters. Also, they must not decide by themselves. Rather, they must first ponder and deliberate on the affair deeply and then consult the responsible men and intelligensia of their nation. Then they must take a decision in the light of these conslutations. This will preclude possibilities of loss or set back at a later stage. The Prophet whom we have heard in this *Hadith* first consulted his people and then came to a conclusion. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ has taught us that we must ask Allah for help under all circumstances. We may have all the means and tools at our beck and call but we must always seek the help of Allah, and we must rely on Him.

In particular, all the people generally and the leaders in particular must make the supplication taught in the *Hadith* in times of war.

The Eighteenth Story

I Contradict My Eyes....

First Words

Allah grants His Prophets large–heartedness and a high degree of humaneness. That is why we often come across amazing facts in their lives. The following incident in the life of Sayyidina 'Isa bin Maryam عليهما السّلام is one such example and though it is very brief, it provides many advantages.

روى البخارى و مسلم في صحيحيهما عَنْ أَبِيْ هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُ عن النبي ﷺ قَالَ: رَأَى عِيْسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ رَجُلا يَسْرِقُ، فَقَالَ لَهُ: أَسَرَقْتَ؟ قَالَ: كَلاَّ وَاللهِ الَّذِيْ لا إِلَهَ إِلا هُوَ، فَقَالَ عِيْسَى: آمَنْتُ بِاللّٰهِ وَكَذَّبْتُ عَيْنِيْ.

Translation

[Imam Bukhari and Imam Muslim have transmitted in their own Sahih the *Hadith* narrated by Sayyidina Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Isa son of Maryam saw a man stealing and asked him, 'Did you steal?' He said, 'No, by Allah, besides Whom there is no other god'. So, 'Isa said, 'I believe in Allah and contradict my eyes'."]

Explanation

The Prophets عليهم السّلام have an exclusive and unique character and their lives are distinct among human beings. They are not like other men and are not daunted by emotions. They are also given to respect humanity and are willing to take over blame in order to save a man from sin.

Sayyidina 'Isa عليه السّلام was one of the glorious and high-ranking Prophets of Allah. He saw a man stealing. His own eyes had seen

him steal and it is the greatness of the Prophets that when they see someone do a wrong they do not keep quiet about it. Hence, 'Isa عليه السّلام lived upto that standard and asked the man, "Do you steal?" That fellow replied, "No! I was not stealing by Him besides Whom no one is worth worshipping."

So, when he swore that he had not stolen, Sayyidina 'Isa عليه السّلام although he had seen him stealing with his own eyes. He confessed to the man, "I believe in Allah and contradict my eyes." In other words, he held a good opinion about another Muslim that he would not take a flase vow. He protected the man from disgrace. We know thus that Prophets try to save a fellow-man from disgrace and shame. It is not that Sayyidina 'Isa عليه السّلام could not distinguish between a liar and a truthful man, but he held the greatness of Allah's name very high in his eyes. It was wrong for him, therefore, to disagree with an oath on Allah, so he differed with the observance of his eyes.

This tells us that the Holy Prophets عليهم السّلام are not supervisors over men and they do not punish them for their faults. The One Who sees them and is Watcher over them Who punishes them is Allah alone. One may swear a false oath and save his skin in this world but there is no escape from the punishment of Allah.

Lessons and Messages

There are many aspects of guidance for us in this *Hadith*:

1. The first thing we know is that the greatness of the Name of Allah is much and man must respect His Name. A Muslim must hold it higher than everything else. If anyone takes the Name of Allah or says something by it then he must not be repudiated or called to question. We must suppose that one who takes the Name of Allah and assures us by it then he cannot be lying by that Name. And if he is a liar and lies by the Name of Allah then he will pay for it surely and be punished. Also, if anyone takes a false oath before a judge on the Name of Allah while there are true witnesses against him then the judge has authority to reject his oath particularly if he tries to usurp the rights of other people through the false oath.

2. We must, as far as possible, conceal the faults of a Muslim from other people. If he apologises for his sins, or denies them, then

we must accept his word provided it does not violate someone else's right and no one is put to hardship. If rights of other people are liable to be encroached upon by concealing a man's faults and sins then there is no harm in disclosing them. Of course, the disclosure must be made only to relevant people. We must refrain from revealing his secrets to people who are not concerned with the matter.

﴿ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَىْءٍ قَدِيْر ٥ ﴾

(Surely Allah has Power over all Things)

PART TWO

Unique Examples of the Powers of Allah

The Nineteenth Story

Sustenance from Heaven

First Words

Trust in Allah and reliance on Him is the asset of men of Allah. It is an asset which renders its owner independent of everyone else. Anyone who is blessed with trust in Allah and reliance on Him finds himself released of everything. The Creator of the universe Himself is Responsible for his needs. Unique and unprecedented examples of His working come to be seen-in their lives.

روى الطبرانى في الأوسط، والبيهقي في الدلائل، عن أبى هريرة قَالَ: "أَصَابَ رَجُلاً حَاجَة، فَخَرَجَ إِلَى الْبَرِيَّةِ، فَقَالَتِ امْرَأَتُه: اللّٰهُمَّ ارْزُقْنَا مَا نَعْتَجِنُ وَمَا نَخْتَبِزُ، فَجَاءَ الرَّجُلُ وَالْجفْنَةَ مَلأى عَجَيْنًا، وَفِي التَّنُّوْرُ الشِّوَاءِ، والرَّحِى تَطْحَنُ، فَقَالَ: مِنْ أَيْنَ هَذَا؟ قَالَتْ: مِنْ رِزْقِ اللّٰه، فَكَنَسَ مَا حَوْلَ الرَّحَى." فَقَالَ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ ﷺ: لَوْ تَرَكَهَا لَدَارَتْ أَوْ طَحَنَتْ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ.

Translation

[Sayyidina Abu Hurayrah رضی اللہ عنہ said, "A man was needy and he went out to the desert in search of livelihood. His wife prayed behind him to Allah, 'O Allah! Grant us what we may knead into bread.'

When he returned, the man found a vessel full of flour, meat roasting in the oven, and flour grinding in the millstone. He asked, 'Where did all this come from?' She said, 'This provision is from Allah.'

That man sweeped the place around the millstone with a broom.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "If he had left it to itself the millstone would have circled on and on till the Day of Resurrection or kept on grinding the flour (which would never have exhausted)."] (Tabarani, Bayhaqi, Bazzar, Ahmad)

Explanation

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ has narrated the story of a pious couple who were very poor and needy and lived a life of destitution. They faced extreme hunger but were blessed with faith and trust in Allah. Extreme hunger forced the husband to go to the desert and look for food and his wife turned to Allah in her terrible predicament for He alone is the Support of those who have no one to lean on. She prayed to Him, "O Allah! Give us some flour that we may grind it into bread."

When the husband returned home, he observed an amazing scene. There was a vessel full of flour. Grinded flour was there and the millstone filled with wheat and it was grinding the flour and the oven was roasting fresh meat. He was surprised how they had fresh meat and plenty of flour. He asked his wife in amazement, "Where did this come from?" She said, "It is a provision from Allah." So, he sweeped the particles around the mill-stone with a broom.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ revealed to us that if he had not swept the place, the mill-stone would have continued to grind in that manner until the Day of Resurrection.

Some people refuse to believe in such events. They argue that this measure to the standard of men's knowledge and their intellect is unwilling to accept them. Denial of these cases which are confirmed by *Hadith* is tantamount to denial of *Hadith* and *Shari'ah* and the powers of Allah because Allah nourishes His slaves even without known agencies.

Man is dependant on means but Allah is not dependent on anything. He is the Lord of worlds. In fact, the means too are created by Him. Hence, His ability encompasses all those things. It is wrong to measure such instances on the scale of man's intellect otherwise we will have to reject an important section of religion–miracles and supernatural occurences which are very true. Slaves of intelelct and materialists look at everything with this narrow approach. Why cannot Allah provide livelihood to His slave who believes in Him,

obeys His commands and relies on Him? He is Allah who nourished Musa عليه السلام at the home of his enemy, Who feeds the worm deep inside a rock, Who turns mother's blood into sustenance for her infant, Who grows seed in the darkness of earth to pierce it and turn into a fruit-bearing tree, Who nourishes millions and billions of mouths all together and will go on doing that until the Day of Resurrection. He does all that and He can provide livelihood to His slave without any apparent agency. To reject is to show oneself as unintelligent. These pages are not meant for it otherwise there are innumerable instances in the Qur'an and *Hadith* that speak of unique and amazing powers of Allah.

Lessons and Messages

1. This *Hadith* confirms that unusual occurences do occur for the pious slaves of Allah. It shows that Allah helps His pious slaves and provides them their livelihood. The *out-of-the-ordinary* acts of the righteous are a reality. It is the belief of the abiders of *sunnah* and the people of the path (*ahl-us-sunnah wa al-Jama'ah*) that the men of Allah and the righteous slaves do perform the extra-ordinary.

However, certain people who pretend to be saints claim to execute miracles and supernatural deeds. Hence, many false stories are reported about them with the result that we may confirm the reliable and true happenings but it is wrong to report everything that reaches our ears. It must also be understood that an unusual occurence cannot be cited in support of an issue or religious argument in place of *Shari'ah*.

2. The *Hadith* also emphasises the significance of supplication to Allah. If a supplication is made sincerely and the necessary conditions are fulfilled then it surely meets divine approval. In fact, sometimes there is a spontaneous response. In our story, the woman's supplication was answered immediately. Therefore, we must always make our supplications remembering to meet the conditions attached to it.

3. The confirmation of this incident by the Prophet ﷺ makes it the most reliable narrative.

His statement also makes it clear that we must refrain from putting a stop to the unexpected blessings of Allah or to show

ungratefulness for them. He said that if the mill-stone was left to itself to grind and the surrounding area was not swept then it would have maintained its production unceasingly until the Day of Resurrection. However, that man was taken aback and he swept and cleaned it and the grinding came to a halt.

Similarly, there was a miracle at the hands of the Prophet ﷺ in the Battle of Trenches. The food prepared by Sayyidina Jabir رضي الله عنه though little was enough for a large army. Here, too, the Prophet ﷺ had said to Sayyidina Jabir رضي الله عنه, "Do not open the vessel until I come." Then, he poured out the broth with his own hands but he covered the utensils again after taking out the broth and bread. (Nabi Rahmah, 329)

Man must not try to investigate into the unseen help but he must have faith in Allah's help and His blessings.

The Twentieth Story

And the Dead Revived....

First Words

It is human nature to try to know more about death and what transpires in the grave. Some of the Bani Isra'il once passed by a graveyard and had an unusual desire to meet a dead person who should revive for them and relate to them his experiences.

Allah let their wish be fulfilled. The following narrative tells us what happened between them and the revived man.

عن جابر بن عبد الله: أن رسول الله ﷺ قَالَ: خَرَجَتْ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيْلَ حَتَّى أَتـُوا مَقْبَرَةَ لَهُمْ مِنْ مَقَابِرِهِمْ، فَقَالُوْا: لَوْ صَلَّيْنَا رَكْعَتَيْنِ، وَدَعَوْنَا اللّٰه عَزَّ وَجَلّ أَنْ يُخْرِجَ لَنَا رَجُلاً مِمَّنْ قَدْمَاتَ نَسْأَلُهُ عَنِ الْمَوْتِ، قَالَ: فَفَعَلُوْا فَبَيْنَمَا هُمْ كَذَالِكَ إِذْ أَطْلَعَ رَجُلٌ رَأْسَهُ مِنْ قَبْرٍ مِنْ تِلْكَ الْمَقَابِرْ؛ خِلاسِيٌّ، بَيْنَ عَيْنَيْهِ أَثَرُ السُّجُوْدِ، فَقَالَ: يَاهٰؤُلاءِ مَا أَرَدْتُمْ إِلَيَّ؟ فَقَدْ مِتُّ مُنْذُ مَائَةِ سَنَةٍ، فَمَا سَكَنَتْ عَنِّيْ حَرَارَةُ الْمَوْتِ حَتَّى كَانَ الآنَ، فَادْعُوا اللّٰه عَزَّ وَجَلّ لِي يُعِيْدُنِي كَمَا كُنْتُ.

Translation

[Sayyidina Jabir bin Abdullah رضي الله عنه has said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "A party of the Bani Isra'il set out on a journey. They came to one of their several graveyards in the course of their jorney and said to one another 'If we should offer two *raka'at Salat* and supplicate Allah, the Full of Glory, perhaps He would revive one of the dead men for us and bring him out that we may ask him about death.'

They did what they had suggested. Meanwhile, from one of the graves, a man raised his head. He was wheat-coloured and between his eyes there was a mark of prostration. He addressed these people saying, 'O you there! What do you intend with me? (Why have you got me revived?) I have been dead for the past hundred years and the fever of death has not yet cooled on me. It is there till now! Pray to Allah, the Glorious, the Majestic, that He may restore me as I was'."]
(Ahmad, Abu Shaybah, Al-Bazzat)

Explanation

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ has narrated in many *Ahadith* the unusual cases of the Bani Isra'il so that we may take a lesson from them. This is because they were a very unusual people. They were very different from other people in habit and their living. Thus there are many unusual cases of their conduct which are full of lessons and guidance for us.

This incident too is extraordinary for Allah answered their supplication and revived a dead man who spoke to them. This was done that they may derive a lesson from it.

Allah is able to bring the dead to life but He has set the principle for this earth that He will not revive them before the Day of Resurrection. However, there have been instances of the dead being resurrected on the supplication of a Prophet or pious people so that the living may take a lesson from that and know that Allah is capable of doing everything. Among these few is the one spoken of in surah Al-Baqarah:

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ خَرَجُوا مِنْ دِيَارِهِمْ وَهُمْ أُلُوفٌ حَذَرَ الْمَوْتِ فَقَالَ لَهُمُ اللَّهُ مُوتُوا ثُمَّ أَحْيَاهُمْ

{Have you (O Prophet) not considered those who went forth from their homes in their thousands fearful of death? Then Allah said to them, "Die". Then He gave them life.}
(Al-Baqarah, 2:243)

This case also refers to the Bani Isra'il. The summary of the exegesis of Ibn Kathir is as follows:

"Some of the Bani Isra'il resided in a city which was inflicted with plague and these people panicked. About ten

thousand of them left the city fearing death and settled far away in a valley between the mountains. Allah wished to show them that there is no escape from death and He punished them. He sent to them two angels who shricked loudly over their heads so that all of them died. Their corpses rotted.

After a long period of time a Prophet of the Bani Isra'il, Sayyidina Hizqeel عليه السّلام passed by there. He saw a large number of human bones and was much astonished with that. Allah revealed to him the whole story, and he prayed to Allah that all of them may be given life once again. Allah accepted his supplication and revived all of them to life." (Ma'ariful Qur'an, English translation, V1-p616)

In the same way there was that man who was killed by some people but Allah brought him back to life and he disclosed those people who had killed him.(Al-Baqarah)

Also, Allah brought to life the dead on the prayer of Sayyidina 'Isa عليه السّلام.

Thus, one of the cases of the dead being brought to life is the one which the *Hadith* of this essay narrates. A group of the Bani Isra'il were travelling and they happened to pass through a graveyard. Suddenly, a thought passed their minds that if one of the dead buried there came back to life they would find out from him the nature of death and the grave. They agreed among themselves that they should offer *Salat* and make a supplication to Allah for that. Hence they offered the *Salat* and made a supplication to Allah Who accepted their plea and a dead pious man came back to life. As soon as he was returned to the living, he addressed some words to these people. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ described him as a wheat-coloured man who had a mark of prostration between his eyes. It shows that this man had been regular in offering *Salat* and obedient to Allah when he lived on earth.

When he was restored to life, the first thing he said to those men was to express his displeasure on their getting him back to life. He disclosed that he had been dead for a hundred years and all the while the heat of death had not cooled. He requested them to pray to Allah to restore him to his condition, (that is, to death).

This shows that the severity of death lasts for a long period of

time.

May Allah preserve all Believers from the severity of death and the agony of the final moments of life! May He grant us comfort in this world and the Hereafter and let our graves be gardens of Paradise. *Aameen!*

Lessons and Messages

1. There is no doubt whatsoever about the authenticity of the reports of earlier people as narrated by the Qur'an and *Hadith*. We must draw a lesson from them.

However, we cannot say anything conclusively of reports received from sources other than the Qur'an and *Hadith*. These are Judaistic traditions and nothing can be said with confidence about their reliability. The agreed principle in this regard is that any of the Judaic traditions which contradict the Qur'an or *Hadith* should be rejected outright.

The Ruling Regarding Judaic Traditions

The *Isra'iliyat* (or Judaic/Judaistic traditions) are the reports that have come to us through the Jews or Christians. Some of the Companions were attached to these religions before they embraced Islam. When they came across references in the Qur'an and *Hadith* to the earlier people they remembered what they had read in the Books of their previous religions and they related the tales to the Muslims. These found their place in the exegesis as *Isra'iliyat*.

Ibn Kathir has said that the *Isra'iliyat* are of three kinds:

i) Those traditions which are proved true by the Qur'an and *sunnah*. For example, the *Isra'iliyat* relates that Prophet Musa عليه السلام visited the Mount Tur, or that the Pharaoh was drowned. The Qur'an confirms these reports.

ii) Those traditions which the Qur'an and *sunnah* prove as wrong. For instance, the Judaic traditions hold that Prophet Sulayman عليه السلام turned an apostate in his last days (we seek refuge with Allah). The Qur'an rejects it when it says وما كفر سليمان (And Sulayman disbelieved not. al-Baqarah, 2:102). The Judaic traditions

also say (we seek the protection of Allah) that Prophet Dawood عليه السلام committed adultery with the wife of his soldier Awriya; this too is a lie according to the spirit of the Qur'an and *sunnah*. We must, therefore, regard such reports as false.

iii) Those traditions about which the Qur'an or *sunnah* or other evidences of *Shari'ah* do not say anything. For example, the commands in Torah, and so on. The teachings of the Prophet ﷺ ask us to say nothing about them, neither must we confirm them nor deny them. (Summary from Muqaddamah, Ma'ariful Qur'an.)

Keeping these things before us, we can conclude that the incident narrated in this *Hadith* is absolutely true and the story is authentic. It is an example of the powers of Allah. Actually, these few incidents of revival of the dead to life impress upon us that Allah Who has revived them will certainly revive all mankind on the Day of Resurrection. Thus the objection of the ignorant is foolish that the dead cannot come back to life because not only their bodies but their bones too would have rotted and wasted.

2. The *Hadith* also tells us that before doing anything important we must offer two *raka'at Salat* and make a supplication to Allah. This is *mustahabb* and it will invite the mercy and blessings of Allah on what we do. The blessings through *Salat* ensure goodness in all our affairs and they are accomplished easily. This is why the Qur'an has commanded the Believers to observe this conduct.

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَوٰةِ

{O you who believe! Seek help in perseverance and prayer}
(Al-Baqarah, 2: 153)

3. The *Hadith* also gives evidence that the righteous and pious people are favoured with supernatural and extraordinary occurences. We have seen that Allah raised a dead man on the supplication of the few pious people.

4. Sometimes, Allah grants the supplication of some of His slaves even though generally such supplications are not granted and may even be contrary to the general practice of Allah.

The Twenty-first Story

Half the Earnings Belong to the Sea!

First Words

Nature sometimes used the mute animals to teach the greedy and avid man a lesson in honesty. This is the story of a man who was dishonest because of excessive greed. Allah taught him a lesson through an ape. The Holy Prophet ﷺ told us about it.

عن أبي هُريرة عن رسول الله ﷺ قَالَ: إنَّ رَجُلاً كَانَ يَبِيْعُ الْخَمْرَ فِي سَفِيْنَةٍ وَكَانَ يَشُوبُ الْخَمْرَ بِالْمَاءِ وَمَعَهُ قِرْدٌ، فَأَخَذَ الْكِيْسَ فَصَعِدَ الدَّقَلَ، فَجَعَلَ يُلْقِيْ دِيْنَارًا فِيْ الْبَحْرِ وَدِيْنَاراً فِي السَّفِيْنَةِ، حَتَّى جَعَلَهُ نَصْفَيْنِ.

Translation

[Sayyidina Abu Hurayrah رضی اللہ عنہ reported the Messenger of Allah ﷺ as saying that a man sold wine on a shop. (He was so greedy that he was not satisfied with his unlawful earnings through wine and so engaged in cheating.) He mixed water into the wine. He had a monkey with him who picked up his purse and climbed up the top of the mast. There, he began to throw a dinar into the sea and a dinar into the ship until he had divided them into two parts (half of it went into the sea because it was income from the adulterated and the man had no right over it).]
(Al-Harbi, Bayhaqi, Ahmad)

Explanation

This is the story of a greedy trader who traded in wine, the worst of the unlawful things. His desire to earn more in a little time induced him to adulterate wine with water.

We must know that wine was not disallowed by some religions before Islam, and it was not forbidden in the beginning in Islam too. Hence, we should not wonder why this man was blamed for adulteration and not for dealing in wine. Or, we should not ask why the *Hadith* has not questioned him for selling wine. We do not get the impression from the *Hadith* that there is nothing wrong in dealing in wine.

We must also remember that this is a story of one of the earlier people. Wine is unlawful, and it is a grave sin in the *Shari'ah* of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ to have to do anything with wine including drinking it, serving it, selling it, buying it, brewing it, preparing it or abetting and helping in these things.

Anyway, that man used to sell wine mixed with water and he carried on his business on a ship. He had a monkey with him who observed his conduct. One day, he suddenly picked up his master's purse and climbed up the top of the mast of the ship so that no one could get hold of him. He opened the purse and threw one dinar into the sea and one into the ship. In this way, he threw away half of the money into the sea and half of it in the ship for the trader. He told him, as it were, that the money that was not his was returned to the sea.

Lessons and Messages

1. The main lesson the *Hadith* teaches us is that cheating and adulteration are wrong acts and are disallowed. It is unlawful to cheat anyone and the income therefrom is unlawful too.

The *Shari'ah* has termed adulteration as the worst of sins. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said من غشّ فليس منا "Anyone who cheats or adulterates is not one of us."

Unfortunately, our Muslim brothers are much involved in this sin. Greedy people, bereft of human qualities, adulterate every necessity of life–milk, honey, ghee (clarified butter), and so on. They also mix impurities in medicine. These people neglect the Hereafter and they sort of worship money. These filthy people play a horrible game with our society very boldly for there is no one to stop them. These people are murderers.

So, it is a grave sin to sell adulterated items just as it is sinful to

adulterate.

2. While Allah will punish the wrong-doer in the Hereafter, sometimes He also gives him some punishment in this world. The problems and difficulties a man faces in this world are the result of his wrong-doing.

Allah punished the trader in our story through his own monkey who threw away half his earnings in the sea.

3. The *Hadith* also reveals amazing secrets of the animals. Allah has given the animals too some intellect and ability to understand some things. The story shows that the monkey understood what was happening and could dispense justice.

4. We also learn from this case that if anyone has accumulated unlawful earnings then he must not use it but throw it away or give it to a needy person. The *Shari'ah* commands us in the first instance to desist from making unlawful earnings but if any of it comes in our hands then we must no use it.

Some people have money derived from interest. It is not proper to use it. Interest earnings are unlawful. It is better to give that money to a deserving person. The *Ulama* should be consulted to determine who the deserving person is.

The Twenty-second Story

A Cow and a Wolf Speak to Man

First Words

The unusual things that happen in this world are the work of the Omnipotent Who tells us that everything is an example of His creative powers. He gives the power of hearing to whom He chooses and the power of speech to whom He likes. He may, if He wishes, withdraw the ability to speak from a healthy person and grant that ability to a mute animal.

The incident that we are about to see is an example of His powers which we have just spoken of. The Creator and Bestower of speech enabled a cow and a wolf to converse with man.

روى البخارى في صحيحه عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ صَلَّى رَسُولُ اللَّه ﷺ صلاةَ الصُّبْحِ، ثُمَّ أَقْبَلَ عَلَى النَّاسِ، فَقَالَ: بَيْنَا رَجُلٌ يَسُوْقُ بَقَرَةً إِذْ رَكِبَهَا فَضَرَبَهَا، فَقَالَتْ: إِنَّا لَمْ نُخْلَقْ لِهَذَا، إِنَّمَا خُلِقْنَا لِلْحَرْثِ. فَقَالَ النَّاسُ: سُبْحَانَ اللَّه، بَقَرَةٌ تَكَلَّمُ! فَقَالَ: فَإِنِّي أُومِنُ بِهَذَا أَنَا وَأَبُوْ بَكْرٍ وَعُمَرُ، وَمَا هُمَا ثَمَّ.

وَبَيْنَمَا رَجُلٌ فِي غَنَمِهِ إِذْ عَدَا الذِّئْبُ فَذَهَبَ مِنْهَا بِشَاةٍ، فَطَلَبَ حَتَّى كَأَنَّهُ اسْتَنْقَذَهَا مِنْهُ، فَقَالَ لَهُ الذِّئْبُ: هَذَا اسْتَنْقَذْتَهَا مِنِّي، فَمَنْ لَهَا يَوْمَ السَّبُعِ، يَوْمَ لا رَاعِيَ لَهَا غَيْرِي، فَقَالَ النَّاسُ: سُبْحَانَ اللَّه، ذِئْبٌ يَتَكَلَّمُ، قَالَ: فَإِنِّي أُومِنُ بِهَذَا، أَنَا وَأَبُو بَكْرٍ وَعُمَرُ، وَمَا هُمَا ثَمَّ.

Translation

[Imam Bukhari has transmitted a *Hadith* narrated by

Sayyidina Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه. He said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ offered the *Fajr Salat* and then turned towards the men and said, A man was driving a cow but soon he mounted on its back and began to beat it (to hasten it). The cow said, "We were not created for this, but only for tilling the ground." The people said, "Glory be to Allah. A cow speaks!" The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "I believe it, as also do Abu Bakr and Umar although they were not there (when it happened)."

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ then said, A man was shepherding some sheep when a wolf attacked and seized one of them. The shephered caught up on it and rescued it and the wolf said to him, "You have solved it today, but who will look after it when the beast of prey's day comes and it has no shepherd but me?" The people said, "Glory be to Allah! A wolf speaks, indeed!" The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "I believe it, as also Abu Bakr and Umar although they were not there (at the time)."] (Bukhari, Muslim)

Explanation

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ often related amazing and unusual events. The present event is one such; it is about a cow and a wolf speaking.

The cow said to its rider that they were not created to transport people from place to place or to work as beasts of burden. They were created to till the ground.

Allah has created different animals for different purposes and they have different characteristics. Every animal has its own peculiarity and it seems that it has been created for a particular work. Thus cows and oxen are not used generally as beasts of burden and for riding. They are not comfortable to the riders, too. Horses, mules, etc. are beasts of burden and riders find them comfortable as riding animals. Cows and oxen and their kind are used to cultivate fields where horses and mules would be out of place.

Allah has given the animals different abilities and characteristics and they must be used accordingly. The cow that we have spoken of said the same thing to its owner.

The people were surprised by that and they said, "*Subhan Allah,*

a cow speaks!" It was an unbelievable fact and they expressed surprise.

The Prophet ﷺ said, "Surely Abu Bakr and Umar too believe it although they were not there." He said that very confidently because he was sure that they had full faith in him and they knew that whatever he said was not false even if it was very unusual and seemingly impossible. This, indeed, is the level of belief in the unseen that is demanded from the Faithful Muslims. They are expected to believe in the unseen even though it may be difficult for the intellect to grasp but which the Qur'an and *Hadith* confirm. These people are described in the Qur'an:

اَلَّذِيْنَ يُؤْمِنُوْنَ بِالْغَيْبِ

{Who believe in the Unseen} (Al-Baqarah, 2:3)

The second story is about the speaking wolf who seized a sheep. The shepherd managed to rescue his sheep boldly from the wolf. On that, the wolf remarked, "Today, you have taken it away from me. But, who will look after it on the day when the beasts of prey will have a field day and only I will be its shepherd. You will then not be able to take it from me."

The *Ulama* have suggested that it could refer to the Day of Resurrection when every one will be concerned about his own safety and no one will care about protecting sheep from wolves. Or, it could refer to the days of festival of the earlier people and their national days when they rejoiced and held fairs. Those people were so engrossed in fun and frolick that they had no time to look after their animals. The wolves seized their domestic animals at such times. (Sharah Nawavi of Muslim)

The people again expressed astonishment that a wolf could talk.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ again said the same thing, "I, Abu Bakr and Umar believe it although we were not there."

Lessons and Messages

1. Basically the *Hadith* bears out the excellence of Sayyidina Abu Bakr رضی اللہ عنہ and Sayyidina Umar رضی اللہ عنہ. For not once, but twice, the Prophet ﷺ said that he and they believe it. He was confident that even if all the other people do not believe, these two

men will agree with what he said and confirm his statement. They had attained such a degree of belief that even if anything seemed unintelligible they would believe what he said and testify to its truthfulness. The *mi'raj* which Sayyidina Abu Bakr رضی الله عنه spontaneously confirmed is an evidence of this statement, and it earned him the Prophet's commendation by calling him As-Siddiq.

Both Bukhari and Muslim have transmitted this *Hadith* in the Chapter on the merits of these two Companions رضی الله عنهم.

2. No one's belief can be perfect without belief in the unseen and in the Messenger. This means that we must believe in whatever the Prophet ﷺ says as true and correct whether we understand it or not. Allah has said in the Qur'an:

وَمَا يَنْطِقُ عَنِ الْهَوٰى إِنْ هُوَ إِلاَّ وَحْيٌ يُّوْحٰى ه

{Nor does he speak out of (his own) desire. This (Qur'an) is naught but a revelation revealed} (An-Najm, 53:3-4)

Belief does not imply that we accept and confirm what we can comprehend but reject whatever our intellect cannot understand. We cannot call it belief in the unseen and the Prophet ﷺ but we might say that it is *belief in intellect* while Islam calls upon us to believe in the unseen and in the Prophet ﷺ. This indeed is what this *Hadith* teaches us.

3. Although it is seemingly improbable that animals speak to man yet it is not against intellect or impossible. Allah is able to give speech to animals. On the day of the Gathering, Allah will seal the tongue and give speech to the other limbs of man which will bear witness against him.

اَلْيَوْمَ نَخْتِمُ عَلٰى اَفْوَاهِهِمْ وَتُكَلِّمُنَا اَيْدِيْهِمْ وَتَشْهَدُ اَرْجُلُهُمْ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَكْسِبُوْنَ ه

{That day We shall seal up their mouths, and their hands shall speak to Us, and their feet shall bear witness as to what they used to earn.} (Yasin, 36:65)

If Allah will give speech to the limbs of man then He can also give speech to the animals and it is not correct to be surprised at that or think that it is impossible. Indeed, to think in that manner is like not believing in the Omnipotence of Allah.

4. The *Hadith* emphasises that the cow is suited to till the ground not to mount over and ride or to carry load. Allah has created

a different animals for all things. The horse or the mule or that kind of animal is suitable to ride and carry burdens. Hence, we must employ every animal for the purpose for which it is created.

5. It is obligatory for a Muslim to believe and confirm all those things which are known from the Qur'an and the authentic *Ahadith* of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ irrespective of whether they are comprehended by human intellect or not. Sometimes denial of anything that is proved through the Qur'an or *sunnah* brackets the denier with disbelievers. Thus, one is termed a disbeliever if he denies the fact of *mi'raj* by the Prophet ﷺ because it is part of religion. However, if a thing is not the basic part of religion and anyone denies it then he is said to be a transgressor. These days it has become a fashion to deny and reject anything from the Qur'an and *Hadith* if one's intellect cannot believe it. This is a very serious crime and we must refrain from doing it.

The Twenty-third Story

A New-Born Child Speaks in the Cradle

First Words

If a newborn child speaks that is very astonishing demonstration of Allah's powers. This brain-puzzling event took place thrice in the history of mankind that a newborn child spoke from the cradle, not mere speech but intelligent speech. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ has informed us that these speakers were Sayyidina 'Isa عليه السلام, a child who spoke in favour of Jurayj and the child of whom we will read in the following *Hadith*.

روى البخارى في صحيحه عن أبي هريرة عن النبي ﷺ قال: كَانَتِ امْرَأَةٌ تُرْضِعُ ابْنًا لَّهَا مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيْلَ، فَمَرَّ بِهَا رَجُلٌ رَّاكِبٌ ذُو شَارَةٍ، فَقَالَتِ: اللَّهُمَّ اجْعَلِ ابْنِي مِثْلَهُ، فَتَرَكَ ثَدْيَهَا، وَأَقْبَلَ عَلَى الرَّاكِبِ، فَقَالَ: اللّٰهُمَّ لا تَجْعَلْنِي مِثْلَهُ، ثُمَّ أَقْبَلَ عَلَى ثَدْيِهَا يَمَصُّهُ. قَالَ أَبُو هُرَيْرَةَ: كَأَنِّي أَنْظُرُ إِلَى النَّبِيِّ ﷺ يَمَصُّ إِصْبَعَهُ.

ثُمَّ مُرَّ بِأَمَةٍ، فَقَالَتِ: أَللّٰهُمَّ لاتَجْعَلِ ابْنِي مِثْلَ هذِهِ، فَتَرَكَ ثَدْيَهَا، فَقَالَ: اللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِي مِثْلَهَا، فَقَالَتْ: لِمَ ذَاكَ؟ فَقَالَ: الرَّاكِبُ جَبَّارٌ مِّنَ الْجَبَابِرَةِ، وَهَذِهِ الأَمَةُ يَقُوْلُوْنَ سَرَقْتِ زَنَيْتِ وَلَمْ تَفْعَلْ.

ونص الحديث عند مسلم: بَيْنَا صَبِيٌّ يَرْضَعُ مِنْ أُمِّهِ، فَمَرَّ رَجُلٌ رَاكِبٌ عَلَى دَابَّةٍ فَارِهَةٍ وَشَارَةٍ حَسَنَةٍ، فَقَالَتْ أُمُّهُ: اللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلِ ابْنِي مِثْلَ هَذَا، فَتَرَكَ الثَّدْيَ، وَأَقْبَلَ إِلَيْهِ فَنَظَرَ إِلَيْهِ فَقَالَ اللّٰهُمَّ لا تجْعَلْنِي مِثْلَهُ، ثُمَّ أَقْبَلَ عَلَى ثَدْيِهِ

فَجَعَلَ يَرْتَضِعُ، قَالَ: فَكَأَنِّي أَنْظُرُ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللّٰهِ ﷺ وَهُوَ يَحْكِي ارْتِضَاعَهُ بِإِصْبَعِهِ السَّبَّابَةِ فِي فَمِهِ، فَجَعَلَ يَمُصُّهَا، قَالَ: وَمَرُّوا بِجَارِيَةٍ وَهُمْ يَضْرِبُونَهَا، وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ: زَنَيْتِ سَرَقْتِ، وَهِيَ تَقُوْلُ حَسْبِيَ اللّٰه وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيْلُ، فَقَالَتْ أُمُّهُ: اللّٰهُمَّ لا تَجْعَلِ ابْنِي مِثْلَهَا، فَتَرَكَ الرَّضَاعَ وَنَظَرَ إِلَيْهَا، فَقَالَ: اللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِيْ مِثْلَهَا.

فَهُنَاكَ تَرَاجَعَا الْحَدِيْثَ، فَقَالَتْ: حَلْقَى، مَرَّ رَجُلٌ حَسَنُ الْهَيْئَةِ فَقُلْتُ: اللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلِ ابْنِيْ مِثْلَهُ، فَقُلْتَ: اللّٰهُمَّ لا تَجْعَلْنِيْ مِثْلَهُ، وَمَرُّوا بِهَذِهِ الأَمَةِ وَهُمْ يَضْرِبُونَهَا، وَيَقُوْلُوْنَ: زَنَيْتِ، سَرَقْتِ، فَقُلْتُ: اللّٰهُمَّ لا تَجْعَلِ ابْنِيْ مِثْلَهَا، فَقُلْتَ: اللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِيْ مِثْلَهَا، قَالَ: إِنَّ ذَاكَ الرَّجُلَ كَانَ جَبَّاراً، فَقُلْتُ: اللّٰهُمَّ لا تَجْعَلْنِي مِثْلَهُ وَإِنَّ هَذِهِ يَقُوْلُوْنَ لَهَا: زَنَيْتِ وَلَمْ تَزْنِ، وَسَرَقْتِ وَلَمْ تَسْرِقْ، فَقُلْتُ: اللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِيْ مِثْلَهَا.

Translation

[It is transmitted by Bukhari that Sayyidina Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه reported that the Prophet ﷺ said, A lady of the Bani Isra'il was nursing her child at her breast when a handsome rider passed by her. She said, "O Allah! Make my child like him." On that the child left her breast and facing the rider said, "O Allah! Do not make me like him." The child then started sucking her breast again. (Abu Hurayrah further said, "As if I were now looking at the Prophet ﷺ sucking his finger in a way of demonstration.")

(The Prophet ﷺ continued) After a while a slave-girl passed by her and the mother said, "O Allah! Do not make my child like this (slave-girl)." The child left her breast and said, "O Allah! Make me like her." When she asked why, the child replied, "The rider is one of the tyrants while this slave-girl is falsely accused of theft and illegal sexual intercourse."]

The version in Muslim reads:

[Then there was a babe who was sucking his mother and a person dressed in fine garment came riding upon a beast. His

mother said, "O Allah, make my child like this one." The babe left sucking and began to see towards him, and said, "O Allah, don't make me like him. He then returned to the chest and began to suck the milk of his mother. Abu Hurayrah said, I perceived as if I am seeing the Messenger of Allah ﷺ as he is explaining the scene of his sucking milk with his forefinger in his mouth and sucking that. He said further that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, There passed by a girl who was being beaten and they were saying, "You have committed adultery and you have committed theft and she was saying, 'Allah is enough for me and He is my good Protector', and his mother said, "O Allah, don't make my child like her." He left sucking the milk and looked towards her and said, "O Allah, make me like her", and there was a talk between them. She said, "O with shaven head, a good-looking person happened to pass by and I said, O Allah, make my child like him, and you said, O Allah don't make me like him, and they had a girl they were beating and saying, you committed fornication and you committed theft, and I said, O Allah, don't make my child like her, and you said, O Allah, make me like her." Thereupon he said, "That person was a tyrant, and I said, O Allah don't make me like him. And they were saying about her, you have committed fornication whereas in fact she had not committed that and they were saying, you have committed theft whereas she had not committed theft, so I said, O Allah, make me like her."]

(Bukhari#3436, Muslim)

Explanation

It is indeed unusual for a new-born child to speak intelligent words and it is very surprising too. Allah demonstrates His powers in different ways. It is obvious from the narrative that the mother had seen a happy person and prayed to Allah that her son be like him but the infant rejected that idea immediately. He was a new-born child. The first thing is that children do not speak at that age let alone an intelligent speech. Then, what he said was quite contrary to the apparent yet exactly according to the facts which were unknown to his mother.

This incident makes it very clear that Allah does not choose merely grown-up, intelligent peoples to illustrate His perfect powers but sometimes He shows them through new-born children.

Allah demonstrated two significant facts through this incident.

The first thing is that the man who seemed to be very happy, a man of glorious personality and majestic life was in reality a great tyrant who oppressed people. Obviously, he was not the one to be immitated.

The second fact was that the oppressed slave-girl who seemed to be extremely destitute and subject of criticism turned out to be a virtuous, pious woman.

Allah gave evidence of His Omnipotence by disclosing these two facts through the new-born child.

Lessons and Messages

These are the advantages we gain from this story:

1. The main message of this story is that the power of Allah, Lord of the worlds, is not subservient to an agency. He is also not dependent on method or common custom of the times. He may, if He chooses, take away the power of speech from an intelligent grown-up or give it to a new-born and make him speak intelligently. He displays His powers in different ways.

2. We also learn from this *Hadith* that there are two aspects of everything—the seen and the unseen. Man must concern himself more with the unseen than with the seen. He must not select anything because of its outward appearance but examine the inward qualities and choose it because of unseen merits.

The mother of the child was impressed by the outward appearance and high-sounding stirring nature of the man to such an extent that she wished that her child should grow up like him. The facts were not like that. The man's awe-inspiring features were the outcome of his cruelty and if they are developed through oppression they are not praiseworthy qualities. They invite punishment of Allah on the owner of the qualities. Allah not only put these things in the heart of the child but He also made him speak out these facts. He rejected his mother's prayers and said that he would not like to be like the man.

Similarly, the mother went by the obvious condition of the slave-girl who had oppression writ on her features and she prayed that her child should not be like that slave-girl. Allah had again put into the child's heart the true position about the slave-girl who was not guilty as her accusers cried out but she was innocent and pious. The child prayed that he would wish to be like her.

The Aim of Supplication

Allah alone knows best that the aim of the child's supplication was not that Allah should grant him the condition of the slave-girl. He knew that she was truthful yet oppressed and he wished that he should live a truthful life even if he has to suffer for that. Also, he thought of the oppressive man who looked grand and was blessed with favours and abundance, and he supplicated that he should not be given those blessings if they were accompanied by an oppressive nature. If the blessings and favours were lawfully acquired then he craved for them but he should be protected from being oppressive and cruel otherwise he preferred poverty and innocence.

The supplication of the child did not mean that he rejected worldly favours. He rejected those favours of the world that are acquired through tyranny and oppression. The second supplication that he made did not mean that he wished for people to accuse and punish him as they did the slave-girl. His prayer was that the slave-girl was on the right and morally well-behved and pious and in spite of that she was oppressed. So, he wished to live a pure and pious life even if that brought him suffering in its wake.

3. We also learn that it is not proper to become opressive (no matter how much of the worldly blessings are received thereby). It is right and preferable to be one who is oppressed (even if one has to face many difficulties because of that). It might be well sounding to people of the world to act cruelly and oppress people in order to acquire worldly possessions and honour but it is deplorable in the sight of Allah and punishable.

4. This episode is helpful in explaining a verse of the Qur'an. Allah has said:

عَسَىٰٓ أَنْ تَكْرَهُوْا شَيْئًا وَّهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ وَعَسَىٰٓ أَنْ تُحِبُّوْا شَيْئًا وَّهُوَ شَرٌّ لَّكُمْ۝

{But it may be that you love a thing while it is good for you

and it may be that you love a thing while it is bad for you.} (Al-Baqarah, 2:216)

Man looks at the outward features of everything. He goes mad when he sees the glitter of anything even if the inside is bad and harmful. He dislikes and hates anything that is not attractive in its outside appearance and he overlooks its intrinsic advantage and goodness.

This approach is wrong. We must examine everything from its external as well as internal aspects. An intelligent person decides only after such an examination.

5. The *Hadith* also teaches a teacher, reformer and a sermoniser that he must employ all permissible avenues to convey the message. The addressees are thus convinced effectively. The Holy Propet ﷺ made a practical demonstration of the child sucking his mother by placing his finger in his mouth and sucking it. This was done that his listeners may understand properly what he said.

We find innumerable examples of this type in the host of *Ahadith* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He frequently demonstrated in a practical way what he explained orally to his listners.

﴿ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴾

(Surely Allah Wastes not the Reward of the Good-doers)

PART THREE

Faith Inspiring Evidences of the Worldly Blessings & Favours of Righteous Deeds

The Twenty-fourth Story

The Cave of Death

First Words

It is the nature of man that when he is in trouble he remembers Allah most sincerely and with deep devotion. When he finds all doors shut and all paths blocked and sees no way out and though he may have been the most negligent of men yet—at such time, he is reminded of Allah. This is the story of three men who were trapped in a cave and to whom its darkness seemed as though they were in the ditch of a grave. When death appeared to move towards them with its jaws wide open, they sought the help of the Being Who is the final hope of the helpless and the forsaken. And, indeed, He did not let them despair but showered His mercy on them as does behove His Being.

روى البخارى ومسلم في صحيحيهما عَنْ عَبْدِ اللّٰه بْنِ عُمَرَ، عَنْ رَسُوْلِ اللّٰه ﷺ، أَنَّهُ قَالَ: بَيْنَمَا ثَلاثَةُ نَفَرٍ يَّتَمَشَّوْنَ أَخَذَهُمُ الْمَطَرُ، فَأَوَوْا إِلَى غَارٍ فِيْ جَبَلٍ. فَانْحَطَّتْ عَلَى فَمِ غَارِهِمْ صَخْرَةٌ مِّنَ الْجَبَلِ، فَانْطَبَقَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ.

فَقَالَ: بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ: انْظُرُوا أَعْمَالا عَمِلْتُمُوْهَا صَالِحَةً لِلّٰهِ، فَادْعُوا اللّٰه تَعَالَى بِهَا، لَعَلَّ اللّٰه يَفْرُجُهَا عَنْكُمْ.

فَقَالَ أَحْدُهُمُ: اللّٰهُمَّ إِنَّهُ كَانَ لِي وَالِدَانِ شَيْخَانِ كَبِيْرَانِ، وَامْرَأَتِيْ، وَلِي صِبْيَةٌ صِغَارٌ أَرْعَى عَلَيْهِمْ، فَإِذَا أَرَحْتُ عَلَيْهِمْ، حَلَبْتُ فَبَدَأْتُ بِوَالِدَيَّ فَسَقَيْتُهُمَا قَبْلَ بَنِيَّ، وَأَنَّهُ نَأَى بِي ذَاتَ يَوْمٍ الشَّجَرُ، فَلَمْ آتِ حَتَّى أَمْسَيْتُ فَوَجَدْتُهُمَا قَدْ نَامَا، فَحَلَبْتُ كَمَا كُنْتُ أَحْلُبُ، فَجِئْتُ بِالْحِلاب، فَقُمْتُ

عِنْدَ رُءُ وسِهِمَا أَكْرَهُ أَنْ أُوقِظَهُمَا مِنْ نَوْمِهِمَا، وَأَكْرَهُ أَنْ أَسْقِيَ الصِّبْيَةَ قَبْلَهُمَا، وَالصِّبْيَةُ يَتَضَاغَوْنَ عِنْدَ قَدَمَيَّ، فَلَمْ يَزَلْ ذَالِكَ دَأْبِي وَدَأْبَهُمْ حَتَّى طَلَعَ الْفَجْرُ، فَإِنْ كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُ أَنِّيْ فَعَلْتُ ذَالِكَ ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِكَ، فَافْرُجْ لَنَا مِنْهَا فُرْجَةً نَرَى مِنْهَا السَّمَآءَ، فَفَرَجَ اللّٰهُ مِنْهَا فُرْجَةً فَرَأَوْ مِنْهَا السَّمَاءَ.

وَقَالَ الآخَرُ: اللّٰهُمَّ إِنَّهُ كَانَتْ لِيَ ابْنَةُ عَمٍّ، أَحْبَبْتُهَا كَأَشَدِّ مَا يُحِبُّ الرِّجَالُ النِّسَاءَ، وَطَلَبْتُ إِلَيْهَا نَفْسَهَا فَأَبَتْ حَتَّى آتِيَهَا بِمِائَةِ دِيْنَارٍ، فَتَعِبْتُ حَتَّى جَمَعْتُ مِائَةَ دِيْنَارٍ، فَجِئْتُهَا بِهَا، فَلَمَّا وَقَعْتُ بَيْنَ رِجْلَيْهَا، قَالَتْ: يَا عَبْدَ اللّٰهِ، اتَّقِ اللّٰهَ، وَلا تَفْتَحِ الْخَاتَمَ إِلا بِحَقِّهِ، فَقُمْتُ عَنْهَا، فَإِنْ كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُ أَنِّي فَعَلْتُ ذَالِكَ ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِكَ فَافْرُجْ لَنَا مِنْهَا فُرْجَةً، فَفَرَجَ لَهُمْ.

وَقَالَ الآخَرُ: اللّٰهُمَّ إِنِّيْ كُنْتُ اسْتَأْجَرْتُ أَجِيْرًا بِفَرَقِ أَرُزٍّ، فَلَمَّا قَضَى عَمَلَهُ قَالَ: أَعْطِنِيْ حَقِّي، فَعَرَضْتُ عَلَيْهِ فَرَقَهُ، فَرَغِبَ عَنْهُ، فَلَمْ أَزَلْ أَزْرَعُهُ حَتَّى جَمَعْتُ مِنْهُ بَقَرًا وَرِعَاءَ هَا، فَجَاءَ نِي، فَقَالَ: اتَّقِ اللّٰهَ، وَلَا تَظْلِمْنِيْ حَقِّي، قُلْتُ اذْهَبْ إِلَى تِلْكَ الْبَقَرِ وَرِعَائِهَا فَخُذْهَا، فَقَالَ: اتَّقِ اللّٰهَ وَلَا تَسْتَهْزِئْ بِي فَقُلْتُ: إِنِّي لا أَسْتَهْزِئُ بِكَ، خُذْ ذَالِكَ الْبَقَرَ وَرِعَاءَ هَا، فَأَخَذَهُ فَذَهَبَ بِهِ، فَإِنْ كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُ أَنِّي فَعَلْتُ ذَالِكَ ابْتِغَاءَ وَجْهِكَ، فَافْرُجْ لَنَا مَا بَقِيَ، فَفَرَجَ اللّٰهُ مَا بَقِيَ.

Translation

[It is narrated by Abdullah bin Umar رضی اللہ عنہ and transmitted in Bukhari and Muslim that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: While three persons (of the Bani Isra'il) were travelling, they were overtaken by rain and they took shelter in a cave in a mountain. A big rock fell down from the top of the mountain over the mouth of the cave and blocked its passage. They said to one another that they should think of such of their good deeds which they had done for the sake of Allah and then invoke Him with reference to that deed so that He may relieve them of their predicament.

One of them said, "O Allah! I had very old parents, my wife and very young children for whose sake I worked as a shepherd, when I returned to them at night and milked the sheep, I gave milk to my parents first before giving it to my children. One day, I travelled far away in search of a grazing spot (for my sheep) and I did not reutrn home till late at night. I found that my parents had gone to sleep already. I milked (the sheep) as usual and brought the milk and stood at their heads. I disliked to wake them up from their sleep and I also disliked to give the milk to my children before I gave it to my parents though my children were crying (from hunger) at my feet. So this state of mine, and theirs, continued till dawn. (O Allah!) if You consider that my deed was only for Your sake and Your pleasure then let there be an opening through which we may see the sky." So, Allah made for them an opening through which they could see the sky.

Then, the second person said, "O Allah! I had a cousin whom I loved as much as a passionate man loves a woman. I tried to seduce her but she refused unless I paid her a hundred dinar. So I worked hard until I had collected one hundred dinar. I went to her with that. But when I sat between her legs, she said, 'O slave of Allah! Fear Allah! Do not deflower me except legally.' So I left her. O Allah! If You consider my deed only for seeking Your pleasure, let the rock move a little to have an opening." So Allah caused the rock to widen the opening for them.

Then, the last of them said, "O Allah! I had employed a labourer on wages at a Faraq (a certain measure) of rice. When he finished his work, he demanded his wages but when I presented his due, he gave it up and refused to take it. Then I kept on sowing that rice for him till I bought with the price of the yield some cows and their shepherd. Later on, the labourer came to me and said, '(O slave of Allah!) Fear Allah! Do not be unjust to me, and give me my due.' I said to him, 'Go and take away those cows and their shepherd.' He said, 'Fear Allah! And do not ridicule me.' So, I said, 'I am not joking with you. Take those cows and their shepherd!' so he took them, and went

[1] also, Al-Hajj, 22: 35

away. (O Allah!) If You consider that I had done that to seek Your pleasure then remove what remains of the rock."

And, so Allah opened for them the remaining obstruction.]

(Bukhari, #5974. Muslim)

Explanation

Hafiz Ibn Hajr Asqalani has pursued the narratives concerning this event and has commented that the authentic *Ahadith* are silent on the place of occurence of this event and the identity of its three individuals or their nationalities.

Nevertheless, the style and words of the *Hadith* suggest that the three individuals belonged to the Bani Isra'il. But Allah alone knows best. Each of the three invoked Allah in reference to his good deeds which shows that they were afraid of Allah and their tribe was also given to piety and righteousness for the girl implored her cousin to refrain from sin for the sake of Allah and tried her best to keep him away from immodesty. These things prove that the entire tribe was pious and righteous. Of the earlier people this trait was most marked in the Bani Isra'il.

However, apart from the questions of identity of the men and locality of the happening, the central point of the story concerns pious deeds and their effects.

The story is very succinctly described in the *Hadith* so there is no need to explain it further.

The three people encountered the hardship while they were travelling. The mouth of the cave was closed completely so that not even a ray of light entered it and the sky was obstructed from their view which meant that death was staring on them. The cave was a cave of death for them and if the rock had not moved away from the mouth, the cave would have been their grave.

In their helplessness and forlorn state they found support only in the Being Who rescues man from all difficulties and trying circumstances. At such times man forsakes all means and agencies and looks only to the Creator of the means and agencies. He redoubles his faith on predestination and the truth of all those things on which he had been relying all his life dawns upon him. His faith in Allah,.the One, Who has no partner becomes most intense and he

turns to him with a greater reliance than before. This behaviour is not peculiar to any individual but it is common to all human beings as their natural instinct.

The three of them agreed after mutual consultation that they should pray to Allah and recall one of their deeds of which they were confident that they had done that solely to earn His pleasure.

Let us now look at their deeds and reflect on them. One of them, a poor man worked all day long to earn his living. When he went home in the evening, he gave preference to his parents over his hungry children. He first satiated their hunger with milk and then fed his children and then his wife. However, if his parents fell asleep then he considered it a violation of the rights of his parents to feed the children before them. Also, it was wrong in his eyes to wake them up. He endured the sight of restless, hungry children all night but he fed his parents before he gave anything to his children. Now, there was no one in the world stopping him from feeding his children but the greatness of his parents was important to him than the hunger of his children. Surely, this deed did not lack in sincerity. It was received with approval by Allah and its blessings earned a slight opening of the passage. Rays of light entered the cave and the sky was visible from inside.

The second person toiled day and night so that he could perpetrate a sin but when he was allowed by his beloved to commit it, it was enough for her to utter only a sentence to stop him from sining. The Name of Allah superceded his desire to sin.

Of course, this is how Believers really are!

إِذَا ذُكِرَ اللّٰهُ وَجِلَتْ قُلُوْبُهُمْ ۝

{When Allah is mentioned their hearts are filled with fear} (Al-Anfal, 8:2)[1]

The man was a believer and a man of character. He was a man of Allah. That is why fear of Allah kept him away from sin. He was not a slave to his base desires. Why should not his deed then meet with approval in the sight of Allah. The moment he called upon Allah in reference to this deed, the rock allowed wider space at the mouth of the cave. Their hope for life was refreshed.

The third person too was a man of character and lofty ideas. His labourer had himself forgone his wages but instead of appropriating

it to himself, he invested in business. His honesty brought much blessings in the business and his animals multiplied. He worked hard for that but when the owner of the wages turned up, he surrendered to him all that he had collected for him by his personal effort.

Can the greedy world present an example of such a character, today? Indeed, it is a novel example for those who suck the blood of other people to build for themselves palatial houses and amass great wealth.

Indeed, these deeds were worth receiving Divine acceptance. Their blessings got the rock to move away from the entrance of the cave and opened for them the door of life.

وَاللّٰهُ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ

{Indeed, Allah is Able to do everything.}

Lessons and Messages

This event is replete with lessons and guidance for us. At every step there is a message for the believers. It is not possible to go into details here but we will mention some significant advantages in brief.

1. This incident very clearly brings out the fact that good deeds and piety are rewarded in this very world and have an impressive mark on an individual's life. We read in every word of this narrative that while the true reward will be received in the Hereafter, Allah lets us see in this world with our eyes the blessings of good deeds. Both piety and wickedness leave their mark in this world. Evil withdraws blessings from man, puts love of the world in him and he tends to neglect the Hereafter. He faces hardship, ignominy, ill fortune and disgrace. Piety brings him blessings, causes him to care for the Hereafter, gives him peace and grows mutual respect among men. Those people who refuse to believe that man's deeds, good or bad, are effective should see that this *Hadith* asserts that they do have an effect.

2. The *Hadith* also makes it clear that we may cite our pious deeds and ask for anything from Allah in reference to that. And, it is also proper to make a supplication with a reference to pious people.

In the case of the three persons that we have read, each of them referred to his pious deeds when he made a supplication to Allah and asked against that deed.

Many people reject *wasilah* or agency and say that it is not proper to refer to an agency. This *Hadith* very unambiguously belies these people.

3. *Taqwa* (deep, God-fearing piety) and fear of Allah are such traits that rescue man from every trial and tribulation. The reality of *taqwa* is that a man refrains from sin merely because he fears Allah although he has the means and ability to sin, is surrounded by sinful atmosphere and has no fear and worry of being nabbed and punished in the world. Fear of Allah overwhelms him otherwise he has no hindrance to committing sin. We have an example of this in the abstinence of the second man who kept himself away from sin simply because of fear of Allah right at the time when he was to get his desire and there was no stopping him and no one to check him. As a result of his *Taqwa*, Allah sremoved the rock and opened the passage. *Taqwa* is thus of advantage in this way. Allah has said:

وَمَنْ يَّتَّقِ اللّٰهَ يَجْعَلْ لَّهٗ مَخْرَجًا ○

{And whosoever fears Allah, He appoints a way out for him} (Al-Talaq, 65:2)

4. The *Hadith* asserts that man must turn to Allah when he is faced with difficulty, anxiety and trial. He must seek forgiveness for his sins frequently. He must remember Allah and when he turns to Allah the difficulty is converted into a blessing for him. May Allah protect us, some people do not turn to Allah even in times of great distress. This is a very dangerous trend and it is a sign that their hearts have rusted.

خَتَمَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى قُلُوْبِهِمْ ○

{Allah has sealed their hearts} (Al-Baqarah, 2:7)

5. There is no limit to giving good treatment to parents. Allah values this attitude very much. No other religion teaches its adherents to give respect and kind treatment to parents as much as Islam does and Allah rewards tremendously right in this world those people who are kind and generous to parents. Piety and kindness to parents is a command on its own in Islam and according to a *Hadith* of the sacred Prophet ﷺ it is the easiest way to go to Paradise.

6. Fear of Allah and standing in awe of Him is part of the great forms of worship which preclude men from sin and disobedience. The heart that is rich with *Taqwa* and fear of Allah will not approach sin even if the surrounding atmosphere is extremely sinful .and there is no risk of censure or punishment by human authorities. It is very easy for such a person to keep away from sin. Fear of Allah stops a man from sining even at the last moment. It is this very attitude that prompted the poor and needy Arab shepherd to ask فأين الله "Where, then, is Allah? Of course, He sees us!" (when he was tempted). Again, it is this fear that kept a poor Arab girl from mixing water into milk in spite of her mother's command and she was then rewarded by Allah to become the grandmother of Umar, the Second, رحمة الله عليه through the medium of al-Farooq.

7. The *Hadith* also tells us that one who intends to commit a sin is not a siner until he gives vent to his intention. The yearn to sin is not sinful but to act according to the longing, the urge, is sinful. The man who had the intention to commit adultery but checked himself just before he could commit it, his conduct earned him reward because the fear of Allah kept him away from sin at a very difficult moment.

8. The *Hadith* is evidence that those people are very near to Allah who recognise the rights of fellow men and give them their rights faithfully. We have the example of the employer who not only kept the wages of his employee safely but also invested them in business to get for him huge returns although it was not binding on him to do anything beyond keeping the wages for him in trust. He gave the employee many times over the principal amount and that was an example of excellent dealings with a fellow-man. His conduct received exceptional approval by Allah with the result that its blessings were helpful in getting the impossible done.

We must, therefore, be careful to give rights of other men. We must refrain from violating rights of fellow-men because they will not be forgiven unless the owner of the rights forgives us himself or we give him his right.

9. This narrative also proves that if a man is honest in his business, agriculture or industry, Allah bestows His blessings in the effort.

Honesty of purpose—a sincere intention—is necessary in every

undertaking and is conducive to blessings in the effort. The employer was sincere and there was no insincerity in his intention. Rather, his intention was very commendable. Hence, when he invested a small sum of money (that was the wages of his employee) into agriculture and farming, Allah blessed his effort considerably and, in a short time, he earned much wealth. It was so much wealth, in fact, that the employee could not believe him when he handed over the trust. That was the result of a sincere intention and honesty.

10. Poverty, hunger and destitution sometimes compell a person to sell his honour and chastity. He is constrained to tumble down to the lowest of levels and sell his body for the sake of a paltry sum of money. Hence, we must pray to Allah to preserve us from poverty, hunger and destitution. We must work hard and seek lawful means of livelihood to save ourselves from destitution.

The reason women sell their bodies is that they face extreme poverty. Helpless girls all over the world offer themselves against a little sum of money. This is the outcome of social imbalance and exploitation.

The economic and social system of Islam is equitable and just and it does not grow a social or monetary imbalance. A modest and chaste woman is not forced to sell her body for money. The wealthy Muslims look after the needs of the poor by paying *Zakah, Sadaqah* and voluntary contributions and in this way society defeats economic imbalance. Indeed, this is the essence of Islam's way of life and its economics.

The Twenty-fifth Story

The Mercy of Allah Looks for Pretext

First Words

When Allah wishes to bless someone with His favours, He showers mercy and forgiveness on slight excuses, like simple, ordinary deeds. He may show kindness to anyone. This is the case of a man who was deeply involved in sin–drowned in it, as it were... But, the mercy of Allah made him worthy of His forgiveness and benevolence.

روى الترمذى في سننه عن ابْنِ عُمَرَ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ النَّبِيَّ ﷺ: يُحَدِّثُ حَدِيْثًا لَوْ لَمْ أَسْمَعْهُ إِلا مَرَّةً أَوْمَرَّتَيْنِ، حَتَّى عَدَّ سَبْعَ مَرَّاتٍ، وَلَكِنِّيْ سَمِعْتُهُ أَكْثَرَ مِنْ ذَالِكَ، سَمِعْتُ رَسُوْلَ اللّٰهِ ﷺ: يَقُوْلُ كَانَ الْكِفْلُ مِنْ بَنِيْ إِسْرَائِيْلَ لا يَتَوَرَّعُ مِنْ ذنْبٍ عَمِلَهُ، فَأَتَتْهُ امْرَأَةٌ فَأَعْطَاهَا سِتِّيْنَ دِيْنَارًا عَلَى أَنْ يَّطَأَهَا، فَلَمَّا قَعَدَ مِنْهَا مَقْعَدَ الرَّجُلِ مِنْ امْرَأَتِهِ أَرْعَدَتْ وَبَكَتْ، فَقَالَ: مَا يُبْكِيْكِ؟ أَأَكْرَهْتُكِ؟ قَالَتْ: لا، وَلَكِنَّهُ عَمَلٌ مَّا عَمِلْتُهُ قَطُّ، وَمَا حَمَلَنِي عَلَيْهِ إِلا الْحَاجَةُ.

فَقَالَ: تَفْعَلِيْنَ أَنْتِ هَذَا، وَمَا فَعَلْتِهِ، اذْهَبِي فَهِيَ لَكِ. وَقَالَ: لا واللّٰه، لا أَعْصِي اللّٰه بَعْدَهَا أَبَدًا، فَمَاتَ مِنْ لَيْلَتِهِ، فَأَصْبَحَ مَكْتُوبًا عَلَى بَابِهِ، إِنَّ اللّٰه قَدْ غَفَرَ لِلْكِفْلِ.

Translation

[Tirmizi has transmitted in his sunnan that Abdullah bin Umar رضى الله عنه said that he heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ

narrate this *Hadith*–and he did not hear him say it once or thrice or four times. five or six times or seven times but–quite often. He said: "Kifl was a man of Bani Isra'il. He never shied away from committing a sin. A woman (once) came to him (on an errand) and he coaxed her to let him perform the immoral act with her against sixty dinars which he gave her. Thus. when he sat down with her to perpetrate the immoral act. she began to tremble and shake violently in fear. He asked her why she was crying, did he not like her. She said that it was not (what he thought) but that she had never committed the sin before and her destitution had complled her to agree to do that (otherwise she would never have done that).

He said that on the one hand she spoke thus and on the other she had committed herself (having taken the money). He added, 'Go, go away from here! That money too belongs to you. No! I swear by Allah, after now, I will never disobey Allah.'

That night he died. In the morning there was an inscription at his door, 'Surely, Allah has forgiven Kifl'."](Tirmizi)

Explanation

This man of the Bani Isra'il, Kifl by name, was a habitual sinner. He violated the limits set by Allah, ridiculed the symbols of religion and dishonoured women. He was wealthy and many people depended on him for monetary help. Many of those who sought his assistance were women. He gave them monetary assistance on the condition that they slept with him and allowed him liberties with them. Poor, destitute women were constrained to submit to his condition.

This narrative tells of a woman who implored him for help and he placed his usual condition before her and agreed to pay her sixty dinars. Having no alternative, she agreed to his demand. When the indecency was about to be perpetrated and he sat next to her, she was overtaken by fear of Allah and began to tremble and sob. He asked her what the matter was and she said that she had never done the indecency ever before and circumstances had compelled her to do it.

These words had their effect on him. He said that while she

professed piety she also asked for money, and he let her to go away without being immodest to her. He then resolved. "By Allah, I will never again disobey Him!"

The mercy of Allah then engulfed him. The moment he repented, Allah decreed that he should die. If anyone repents sincerely, he becomes innocent of sins and is like one who has never committed a sin. Allah kept him away from sinful atmosphere and that very night he died. In the morning, people read the message at his door, "Surely, Allah has forgiven Kifl."

When Allah shows mercy to anyone then he gains pardon without a stern effort. He Who is The Forgiving, The Merciful does not need anyone to worship Him or perform good deeds to forgive them. He bestows His favours on anyone He likes and there is no one to stop Him from doing that. He is *As-Samad* (The Independent) and may bestow favours on whom He will. ذَٰلِكَ فَضْلُ اللَّهِ يُؤْتِيهِ مَن يَشَاءُ

Lessons and Messages

1. This *Hadith* reveals the attribute of Allah, *As-Samad,* The Independent. He is independent of anyone else's suggestion or permission. He does what He likes and no one may question Him about what He does. He dispenses guidance, and forgives whom He wills. He forgives anyone without his having done a good deed to entitle him to forgiveness. He is the One Who bestows and accepts a sincere repentance in the heart which leaves everyone in surprise.

2. Man must not form an opinion about other people by observing their appearances and outward conditions because the biggest of the sinners can be embraced by the mercy of Allah at any time. Similarly, a most devoted worshipper and ascetic may earn Divine wrath suddenly at any moment.

He may, if He wishes deprive *Bal'am Ba'oor* of mercy in spite of his long hours of worship, or summon a bandit like Fadil bin Ayyad to His path in a few moments and shower His mercy on him. The *Hadith* has cited an example of this possibility.

3. We must endeavour to save ourselves from dependency and destitution and seek refuge with Allah. It is such a thing that can draw man towards the most detestable deed and compel him to do it.

4. We also learn from this *Hadith* that the Companions رضى الله عنهم

were very careful in narrating a *Hadith*. Ibn Umar رضى الله عنه has said that if he had heard this *Hadith* from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ once or twice, three times or four times, or five or six times, he would not have related it to other people, for he feared he might ascribe to the Prophet ﷺ what he had not said, or he might make a mistake in narrating the *Hadith* which would be a very grave sin. He had heard this *Hadith* more than seven times from the Prophet ﷺ. That is why he related it with full confidence and authority.

Undoubtedly, this is the way a *Hadith* of the Prophet ﷺ should be handled. Unless one knows it very well, one must not narrate it to anyone else as from the Messenger of Allah ﷺ.

The Twenty-sixth Story

The Clouds too Obey Divine Command

First Words

The universe and whatever is in it are subject to the command of Allah. The sun, the moon, the stars, the planets revolve and rotate at His command. The clouds that saturate the earth and quench the thirst of the fields turning them into green, fertile gardens also obey His command. They cannot empty themselves at their own descretion. Once a slave surrenders himself to his Master, He employs everything in the universe for his good. The universal system is administered in a way that is beneficial for that slave. The story we will now read is about a person who had given himself up to Allah and He had turned to him.

روى مسلم في صحيحه عن أبي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ: بَيْنَا رَجُلٌ بِفَلاةٍ مِّنَ الارْضِ، فَسَمِعَ صَوْتًا فِي سَحَابَةٍ: اسْقِ حَدِيْقَةَ فُلانٍ، فَتَنَحَّى ذَالِكَ السَّحَابُ، فَأَفْرَغَ مَاءَهُ فِي حَرَّةٍ، فَإِذَا شَرْجَةٌ مِّنْ تِلْكَ الشِّرَاجِ قَدِ اسْتَوْعَبَتْ ذَالِكَ الْمَاءَ كُلَّهُ، فَتَتَبَّعَ الْمَاءَ، فَإِذَا رَجُلٌ قَائِمٌ فِي حَدِيْقَتِهِ، يُحَوِّلُ الْمَاءَ بِمِسْحَاتِهِ، فَقَالَ لَهُ: يَا عَبْدَ اللّٰهِ مَا اسْمُكَ؟ قَالَ: فُلانٌ لِلاسْمِ الَّذِيْ سَمِعَ فِي السَّحَابَةِ.

فَقَالَ لَهُ: يَا عَبْدَ اللّٰهِ لِمَ تَسْأَلُنِيْ عَنِ اسْمِي؟ فَقَالَ: إِنِّي سَمِعْتُ صَوْتًا فِي السَّحَابِ الَّذِيْ هَذَا مَاؤُهُ يَقُوْلُ: اسْقِ حَدِيْقَةَ فُلانٍ لاسْمِكَ فَمَا تَصْنَعُ فِيْهَا؟

قَالَ: أَمَّا إِذْ قُلْتَ هَذَا، فَإِنِّي أَنْظُرُ إِلَى مَا يَخْرُجُ مِنْهَا، فَأَتَصَدَّقُ بِثُلُثِهِ، وَآكُلُ أَنَا وَعِيَالِي ثُلُثًا، وَأَرُدُّ فِيْهَا ثُلُثَهُ.

Translation

[It is transmitted in Sahih Muslim that Sayyidina Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه narrated that the Prophet ﷺ said, "While a person was in the wilderness he heard a voice from the cloud (commanding it), 'Irrigate the garden of so-and-so.' After that the cloud (separated from other clouds) and came to a side and poured water on a stony ground. It filled a channel amongst the channels of that land. That person followed the water and found a man standing in the garden occupied in channeling the water with the help of a hatchet. He said to him, 'Servant of Allah, what is your name', and he gave him the same name that he had heard from the cloud. Then, the other asked him, 'Servant of Allah, why do you ask me my name?' He said, 'I heard a voice from the cloud which has brought the downpour saying: Water the garden of so-and-so, taking your name. What do you do that Allah has shown you favour in this matter?' He said, 'Now that you ask, I look what yield I get from it, and I give one-third as charity out of it and I and my children eat one-third of it and one-third I return to it as investment'."] (Muslim, *Hadith* # 7112)

Explanation

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ has mentioned in this *Hadith* how Allah helps His obedient slaves in amazing ways. When a slave works for the pleasure of Allah He helps him in unseen ways.

The gist of this incident is that someone was in a wilderness and he heard a voice directing a cloud to water someone's garden. The voice emanated from a cloud and the speaker was not visible. The listner was, therefore, surprised.

He saw that the cloud moved away from the other clouds and shed its water on a stony ground a short distance away. The land did not absorb the water because it was stony ground and the water collected in the small channels there and flowed in a direction.

He went along the course of the water until he was at a garden into which the water flowed. A man was standing there directing the water into different tributaries across the field. That garden had no river to irrigate it but depended on rain water for its product. So, Allah commanded the cloud to saturate this man's fields.

There is an interesting point here. The cloud burst on a stony ground although it could have rained directly on the garden. Of course, Allah alone knows the reason but (according to our minds) sometimes direct rainfall might damage produce and it was necessary to channel the water to the roots deep inside the ground.

Nature had arranged that the rain would fall on stony land which did not absorb water and then flow through many chanels into that man's garden where he disbursed it according to the needs of the different sections of his garden.

The man who had heard the voice and investigated the working of nature could not contain himself and asked the owner of the garden what his name was. He told him his name which was what he had heard from the cloud.

The owner of the garden then asked him why he wanted to know his name and he told him his story and asked him what had earned him Allah's favour.

He let him know that he divided the produce into three parts. One of these shares, he allocated to the poor and needy, another he spent on his family and the third he reinvested into the land.

Allah approved his deed and arranged for him an unseen source for his irrigation. This man toiled hard day and night and perspired heavily in the process and then spent a part of his income on the poor and needy. It really calls upon a great sacrifice to do that.

Lessons and Messages

1. Everything in the universe and the working of the universe and its every body is dependent on the command of Allah. A cloud, for instance, will pour its water where it is commanded to pour it and not at any other place it chooses. We often see rain-bearing clouds over us and feel that they would rain over us but they move away and pour down where they are commanded. We see this day in and day out.

2. We see in this *Hadith* how Allah makes hidden arrangements for the sustenance of His slaves. He does not let the good deeds of His pious slaves go to waste. In fact, He demonstrates the blessings of their deeds in this world too and lets them have the reward.

3. To give in *sadaqah* is a very superior deed. It receives the

mercy of Allah. The owner of the garden also received the blessings of *sadaqah.* A cloud was commanded to rain over his garden and his name was called out to it.

4. Allah loves moderation in every affair and the giving of the right of every person. Allah loved very much the just distribution this man had made of his earnings whereby everyone received his right. He did not let anyone's right be encroached upon by giving someone else more than his due. For instance, he did not spend more on *sadaqah* and deprive his family, or spend more on his children and diminish the share of *sadaqah.* He also kept aside what was the due of his fields so that his source of income was not disturbed.

It is more commendable and intelligent to serve the needy than to become a needy himself.

The Twenty-seventh Story

The Beloved Slave of Allah

First Words

If anyone is unselfish, sincere and disinterested in his love for a fellow slave of Allah then he becomes the beloved of his Lord. The creatures are the family of Allah. To love His family is truly to love the Creator. However, such sincere sentiment is now-a-days very rare to find. We find at every step friendship for selfish ends and love for personal motives and when the ends and motives are achieved the claims of friendship and love prove unreal. The idiosycrasy of a Believer is that he loves for the sake of Allah and hates for the sake of Allah. We relate the case of an individual who loved unselfishly disinterested about personal gains.

روى مسلم في صحيحه عَنْ أَبِيْ هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ: أَنَّ رَجُلا زَارَ أخًا لَهُ فِيْ قَرْيَةٍ أُخْرَى، فَأَرْصَدَ اللّٰه لَهُ عَلَى مَدْرَجَتِهِ مَلَكًا، فَلَمَّا أَتَى عَلَيْهِ، قَالَ: أَيْنَ تُرِيْدُ؟ قَالَ: أُرِيْدُ أَخًا لِي فِي هَذِهِ الْقَرْيَةِ، قَالَ: هَلْ لَكَ عَلَيْهِ مِنْ نِّعْمَةٍ تَرُبُّهَا؟ قَالَ: لا، غَيْرَ أَنِّي أَحْبَبْتُهُ فِي اللّٰه عَزّوجَلّ، قَالَ: فَإِنِّي رَسُوْلُ اللّٰه إِلَيْكَ بِأَنَّ اللّٰه قَدْ أَحَبَّكَ كَمَا أَحْبَبْتَهُ.

Translation

[Sayyidina Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه has quoted the Holy Prophet ﷺ as saying: A person visited his brother (Muslim) in another town and Allah deputed an angel to wait for him on his way. And when he came to him he asked him, "Where do you intend to go?" He said, "I intend to go to my brother in this town." He asked, "Have you any right over him (for the recompense of which you go there)?" He said, "No, (the

purpose of the visit is) nothing but I love him for the sake of Allah, the Glorious, the Majestic."

The angel then disclosed to him, "I am a Messenger to you from Allah (to inform you) that Allah loves you as you love him (for His sake)."] (Muslim, *Hadith* # 6226)

Explanation

This *Hadith* divulges to us the merits of love with the slaves of Allah for His sake, and especially with the Believers. The *Hadith* also tells us what excellent reward is in store for this sort of love. Indeed, to love for the sake of Allah is a very difficult thing to do.

In this world such qualities as selfishness, seeking personal gains and lying are very common but selfless love and sincerity are lacking qualities. Things have gone so far that even blood relations are subservient to selfish motives.

The *Shari'ah* demands of us that we must not make friends with anyone or antagonise him for personal gains, tribal interests or class benefits. We must not love anyone because he belongs to the same group as we, or because we have certain benefits to derive from him. These standards are wrong and untenable in *Shari'ah*. This attitude grows hypocrisy, malice and hatred in the world.

It is our experience, and it is seen everyday that if friendship is maintained for selfish ends then the consequences are that the so-called friends become worst enemies. Such is the outcome of wrong standards of friendship.

The driving force to make friends or to antagonise anyone should be the pleasure of Allah. If anyone is an enemy of Allah then he is our enemy too; if we love anyone, it must no be to get anything out of him, or for selfish motives or personal urge. If we love then it must not be for such things and if we hate anyone that too must be on the same basis.

The story relates that to love anyone for the pleasure of Allah gets us the best of rewards. If we love Allah's slaves sincerely without selfish ends then we become the object of Allah's love. And if any slave becomes the beloved of Allah then all the world loves him. There is an indication to this truth in another *Hadith*.

Among the best peculiarities of faith is to love anyone for the sake of Allah. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ has told us that those who

love each other for the sake of Allah without selfish ends will find themselves on the pulpits of light on the Day of Resurrection. The Prophets عليهم السّلام and the martyrs will envy them for the exceptional reception accorded to them and for their nearness to Allah.

Indeed, to love for the sake of Allah is the key to auspiciousness in this life and in the next.

Lessons and Messages

1. The *Hadith* is evidence of the merit of love for the sake of Allah. He who loves His slaves becomes the beloved of Allah.

2. The *Hadith* also affirms that in order to demonstrate one's love for the sake of Allah, it is proper and rewarding to travel to meet and visit friends and companions.

3. Allah sends His angels in human form to some of His slaves. They come to them to give advice, to explain or to point out his excellent deed and the regard for it with Allah. The angel who comes to anyone is neither a Prophet nor a Messenger.

4. The *Hadith* also affirms that angels may appear in human form or any other form. The angel had come to the central character of our story in human form, not angelic form.

5. What is the worth of sincerity in the sight of Allah? This can be guaged from the fact that man gets through the blessings of sincerity what he cannot earn through efforts over a number of years. This man earned the honour of love of Allah because he was sincere.

May Allah grow among Muslims sincere and unselfish love for one another. *Aameen!*

The Twenty-eighth Story

The Bounties of the Benevolent

First Words

He is the Justest of Judges, the Most Merciful of those who show mercy. *As-Samad* is one of His attributes. He is absolutely Independent and may forgive whom He wills and bestow favours on whom He likes. No one can question Him. It is His glorious attribute of Mercy that He forgives an immoral woman when she gives water to the thirsty.

Here, we have chosen two brief accounts reflecting on His attribute of Benevolence from the treasure of *Ahadith*.

١. روى البخارى في صحيحه عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِىَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ رَسُوْلَ اللّٰهِ ﷺ قَالَ: بَيْنَا رَجُلٌ يَّمْشِيْ، فَاشْتَدَّ عَلَيْهِ الْعَطَشُ، فَنَزَلَ بِئْرًا فَشَرِبَ مِنْهَا، ثُمَّ خَرَجَ، فَإِذَا هُوَ بِكَلْبٍ يَّلْهَثُ، يَأْكُلُ الثَّرَى مِنَ الْعَطَشِ، فَقَالَ: لَقَدْ بَلَغَ هَذَا مِثْلُ الَّذِيْ بَلَغَ بِيْ، فَمَلأَ خُفَّهُ، ثُمَّ أَمْسَكَهُ بِفِيْهِ، ثُمَّ رَقِيَ، فَسَقَى الْكَلْبَ، فَشَكَرَ اللّٰه لَهُ، فغَفَرَ لَهُ قَالُوْا: يَا رَسُوْلَ اللّٰه، وَإِنَّ فِي الْبَهَائِمِ أَجْرًا؟ قَالَ: فِي كُلِّ كَبِدٍ رَطْبَةٍ أَجْرٌ.

٢. وروى مسلم في صحيحه عَنْ أَبِيْ هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ: أَنَّ امْرَأَةً بَغِيًّا رَأَتْ كَلْبًا فِي يَوْمٍ حارٍ يُطِيْفُ بِبِئْرٍ، قَدْ أَدْلَعَ لِسَانَهُ مِنَ الْعَطَشِ، فَنَزَعَتْ لَهُ بِمُوْقِهَا، فَغُفِرَ لَهَا.

٣. وفى رواية عند البخارى عن أبي هريرة: غُفِرَ لامْرَأَةٍ مُومِسَةٍ مَرَّتْ بِكَلْبٍ عَلَى رَأْسِ رَكِيٍّ يَّلْهَثُ، قَالَ: كَادَ يَقْتُلُهُ الْعَطَشُ، فَنَزَعَتْ

خُفَّهَا، فَأَوْثَقَتْهُ بِخِمَارِهَا، فَنَزَعَتْ لَهُ مِنَ الْمَاءِ فَغُفِرَ لَهَا بِذَالِكَ.

Translation

[1. Bukhari has transmitted: Sayyidina Abu Hurayrah رضی الله عنه has quoted the Messenger of Allah ﷺ as saying: While a man was walking he felt thirsty and went down a well and drank water from it. On coming out of it, he saw a dog panting and eating mud because of excessive thirst. The man said, "This dog is suffering from the same problem as I had been suffering." So he (went down the well), filled his shoe with water, caught hold of it with his teeth and climbed up and watered the dog. Allah appreciated his gesture and Allah forgave him. The people asked, "O Allah's Messenger! Is there a reward for us in serving the animals?" He replied, "Yes, there is reward for serving the animate."]

[2. Muslim has transmitted: Abu Hurayrah رضی الله عنه has said that the Prophet ﷺ said:

A prostitute saw a dog moving around a well on a hot day and hanging out its tongue because of thirst. She drew water for it in her shoe, and she was pardoned (for that).]

[3. The words in Bukhari are:

A prostitute passed by a panting dog near a well. She saw that the dog was about to die of thirst, she took off her leather sock (or shoe) and tied it with her head-cover and drew out some water for it. So Allah forgave her because of that.](Bukhari, *Hadith* 2363. Muslim, # 5578. Bukhari, # 3321)

Explanation

The two accounts narrated above look alike. The first mentions a man travelling somewhere. He felt severe thirst during his journey and he came to a well. There were plenty of wells at short distances in those times. He went down it and quenched his thirst. When he came out again, he found a thirsty dog and he remembered that he too was in that condition a short while ago. Quickly, he went in the well once again and filled his shoe with water and holding it in his teeth, came up and gave the water to the dog.

The second account is about a prostitute. She saw a thirsty dog panting and she became restless. She drew water in her shoe (or

sock) and gave it to the dog. Those people used to wear leather socks (or shoes) and water could be contained therein.

In the both the cases, Allah forgave the persons involved in the good deed.

The qualities that Allah has granted mankind are not granted to any other creature. Man is able to descend into a well and get water for himself while other creatures cannot do that. Allah put emotions into the hearts of those persons to feel mercy for the dog and then that became an excuse for forgiving them. Indeed, إِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ. Allah is over all things capable!

It is worth observing that in both cases, there was nothing available to draw water from the well—neither a rope, nor a bucket. The man could quench his own thurst by going down the well but how could he water the dog? So, he took out his shoe, or sock, and filled it with water and brought it up clasped in his teeth. This indeed was an improvisation! In normal circumstances, one does not bring one's shoes or socks near one's face but, here, he did not merely bring his shoe near his mouth, he held it by his teeth. He was prompted by mercy to do so.

The woman too had nothing by which she may draw water and she could not descend down the well. She used her leather sock as a bucket and her head cover as a rope.

In both the cases, the persons concerned did not mind the trouble they had to face to help the dog. Allah forgave them for that. The dog is an impure and dirty animal and man is instinctly repulsed from it particularly if it is a stray dog. But, to help the creatures of Allah is a worthy deed in the sight of Allah and they earned forgiveness for that.

Lessons and Messages

There are many aspects of guidance and moral in these accounts:

1. To show mercy to the creatures of Allah entitles us to the mercy and benevolence of Allah. It is particularly good to be merciful to the mute animals and it earns us a very great rank. We can also deduce from the story that if there is merit in showing mercy to the mute animals, how sinful it should be to be cruel to

them. It is liable to invite the punishment of Allah.

2. Man is sometimes forgiven for doing a seemingly minor deed. However. any man may be forgiven or shown mercy at any time. One who has sinned all his life can suddenly find himself among the close men of Allah while a hundred year's worship may be erased by a moment's lapse!

Hence, it is not correct to form an opinion about anyone by merely looking at his apparent condition. We must know definitely how he concluded his life and on what state he died.

3. The *Hadith* also proves that we must not consider any act of piety too little. It may seem too little on the face of it but in the sight of Allah its size and appearance is immaterial. The spirit behind it is what counts when a decision is taken in this regard.

لا تحقرن من المعروف شيئا

[Do not belittle even a bit from the known (piety)]

That minor act could turn out to be a means of forgiveness because Allah, the Majestic, the Glorious, is the One Who bestows without limit—provided we present an excuse on which He may favour. Who knows what excuse may be made the base for the grant!

4. A Muslim does not become a disbeliever if he disobeys and commits grave sins, neither is he deprived of Allah's mercy. Sometimes a grave sinner is forgiven, even if he has not repented, on the basis of a pious deed as the woman was forgiven. We must not call a sinning Muslim an unbeliever no matter how big sinner he is.

5. It is a very commendable deed to mould oneself according to the attributes (or manners) of Allah.

تخلقوا باخلاق الله

[Mould your manners on the pattern of manners of Allah.]

Allah loves anyone who tries to observe this conduct.

The importance of worship and of discharging the obligations is known to all of us and we must abide by it but it is a sign of a great man to show mercy to the creatures of Allah and deal with them kindly.

The Prophet ﷺ taught this lesson in human behaviour to his Companions رضى الله عنهم. It was this lesson that spread Islam in the four corners of the world.

The Twenty-ninth Story

A Serious Mistake–Caused by Fear of Allah!

First Words

This is the story of a man who sined all his life. Then, he made a serious mistake through fear of Allah but the mercy of Allah brought him out successfully. This story highlights the importance of fear of Allah.

روى مسلم في صحيحه عَنْ أبي هُرَيْرَةَ أنَّ رَسُوْلَ اللّٰه ﷺ قَالَ: قَالَ رَجُلٌ لَمْ يَعْمَلْ حَسَنَةً قَطُّ لأهْلِهِ: إذَا مَاتَ فَحَرِّقُوْهُ، ثُمَّ اذْرُوا نِصْفَهُ فِي الْبَرِّ، وَنِصْفَهُ فِي الْبَحْرِ، فَوَاللّٰهِ لَئِنْ قَدَرَ اللّٰه عَلَيْهِ لَيُعَذِّبَنَّهُ عَذَابًا لا يُعَذِّبُهُ أحَدًا مِنَ الْعَالَمِيْنَ، فَلَمَّا مَاتَ الرَّجُلُ فَعَلُوا مَا أمَرَهُمْ، فَأمَرَ اللّٰه الْبَرَّ فَجَمَعَ مَا فِيْهِ، وَأمَرَ الْبَحْرَ فَجَمَعَ مَا فِيْهِ، ثُمَّ قَالَ: لِمَ فَعَلْتَ هَذَا؟ قَالَ: مِنْ خَشْيَتِكَ يَا رَبِّ، وَأنْتَ أعْلَمُ، فَغَفَرَ اللّٰه لَهُ.

Translation

[Sayyidina Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه narrated that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said:

A man who had never done a pious deed said to his family members, "When I die burn me to ashes and divide the ashes into two parts. Scatter one of them on land and the other in the ocean. By Allah! If Allah gets hold over this body, He will punish it as severely as He may not have punished any one else."

When he died, his family members obeyed his instructions.

Allah commanded the land to gather his ashes and it collected every particle of his ashes on it. And He commanded the ocean and it too gathered all particles even from its depths. (Then He gave it life and speech and) He asked him. "Why did you do that?"

He said, "My Lord! Fear of You!" So Allah forgave him.] - (Muslim. Bukhari)

Explanation

This incident is reported both by Bukhari and Muslim in different chapters of their *Sahih* collections. The summary of the different narrations is reproduced in the following lines:

He was a very wealthy man and had many children. In spite of these blessings of Allah, he was an intemperate person and cruel to himself. He was far removed from piety and all his life he sinned and disobeyed.

When death seemed near, the thought passed his mind that although he enjoyed considerable blessings of Allah and lived a very luxurious life, he had been disobedient to Allah throughout his life. At the same time as he gave up hope of life, it dawned on him that Allah will punish him after death so severely that He would not have punished anyone else as severely for he was aware of every moment of his life and how he had spent it. He was so overawed by this thought that he forgot that Allah is capable of doing everything. He had given life to nothing. Would He not be able to gather scattered particles in the expanse of the universe and revive it?

Overcome by fear he summoned his sons and asked them, "What kind of a father was I for you?" They assured him that he had been an excellent father. He said, "I have never done a single good deed to present it before Allah. If he gets hold of me, He will punish me as He has not punished anyone else before me. So, when I die, burn me to ashes and scatter half of my ashes over the land and sink the rest of them into the oceans. If you do not do that then I will deprive you of your inheritance and give away my property to other people."

His sons did as he had instructed them and scattered his ashes over the land and water.

Allah commanded the land to fetch his ashes from all over it and place them together, and it did as it was commanded. The ocean too was given the same command and it gathered his ashes from its depths. When every particle of his ashes was there, Allah gave him life again and asked him why he had left the unusual instructions for his children.

He said, "My Lord! You know very well that I had done that because I was afraid of you."

Allah forgave him because of his fear of Him.

Obviously, the instructions that he had left were illegal for just as a living person should be respected so too a dead body must be shown respect. No one is allowed to be disrespectful to a corpse and it is disallowed and sinful to leave such instructions for one's own dead body. So, this man's behaviour in leaving instruction of this type was very sinful. Besides, it presupposed that if his body was treated in this way, he would defeat Allah's plans to revive and punish him—God frobid us from such thought. Naturally, this was a serious lapse of religious thinking.... However, this mistake and the wrong approach were prompted by fear of Allah and punishment at His Hands. So, Allah forgave him his mistake (and his sins).

Lessons and Messages

1. Fear of Allah is a very noble asset and a very cherished characteristic in any person. It is among the lofty eminences of the righteous. The heart that is blessed with fear and reverence for Allah will be protected from sin and disobedience and Allah forgives sins because of the fear. One is relieved of base desires too on account of that. Allah has said:

وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ. فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ

{But as for him who feared the standing before his Lord and restrained (his) soul from caprices, surely the Garden shall be his abode.} (An-Nazi'at, 79:40-41)

It is this fear that is refered to in surah Ar-Rahman:

وَلِمَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ جَنَّتَانِ

{And for him who fears the standing before his Lord, there shall be two gardens.} (Ar-Rahman, 55:46)

2. Sometimes, Allah excuses a man because of his ignorance. The excuse of the man we are talking about was accepted because of his ignorance although his mistake was very serious. He had supposed that Allah was unable to collect his scattered ashes and give him life again and punish him. His foolish will was based on his ignorance, but the driving force was fear of Allah. Hence, Allah admitted his plea.

Sometimes, knowledge of anything is cited against the knower while ignorance is admitted in defense of the ignorant but this does not imply that we must cease to seek knowledge and prefer to remain ignorant or become ignorant. Rather, it implies that just as ignorance is very dangerous so too the knowledge that is not put to practice is extremely dangerous and liable to be accounted for. The Holy Prophet ﷺ has sought refuge from such knowledge (as is not put into practice).

اللّٰهم إنی اعوذ بك من علم لاينفع

"O Allah! I seek Your protection from knowledge that does not benefit."

3. The *Hadith* demonstrates the perfect power and authority of Allah. Just as He revived this man by gathering his ashes from land and ocean so too He will revive all creatures on the Day of Resurrection.

4. The *Hadith* teaches us that we must not feel despondent under any circumstances. Allah forgave this man who made a very serious mistake and never in his life did any pious work and, in fact, confessed that he was sinful. Then, why should we not hope that He will forgive every one who makes a sincere repentance and seeks forgiveness?

5. We also learn that a Believer must maintain two approaches, fear and hope—fear of being punished and hope for His mercy. It is not correct to lean on any one approach. Extremity of fear results in the condition of the man in the story while too much dependance on hope makes one neglect pious deeds. Hence, we must strike a balance between the two approaches.

The Thirteeth Story

Show Mercy to the Earthlings....

First Words

To forgive and to show favour are among the attributes of Allah. If anyone adopts these characteristics in this world then Allah will deal with him in the Hereafter with these very characteristics. This is an account of a person who was devoid of good qualities but who was very lenient to his debtors and condoned them. It is a soul-stirring account of his life.

١. روى البخارى في صحيحه عن حذيفة قال: سمعت رسول اللهﷺ يقول: إنَّ رَجُلا كَانَ فِيمَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ أتَاهُ الْمَلَكُ لِيَقْبِضَ رُوْحَهُ، فَقِيْلَ لَهُ: هَلْ عَمِلْتَ مِنْ خَيْرٍ؟ قَالَ: مَا أعْلَمُ؟ قِيْلَ لَهُ: انْظُرْ. قَالَ: مَا أعْلَمُ شَيْئًا، غَيْرَ أنِّي كُنْتُ أُبَايِعُ النَّاسَ فِيْ الدُّنْيَا وأُجَازِيْهِمْ، فَأُنْظِرُ الْمُوسِرَ، وأَتَجَاوَزُ عَنِ الْمُعْسِرِ. فَأدْخَلَهُ اللّٰه الْجَنَّةَ.

٢. وفى رواية عن حذيفة أيضًا: تَلَقَّتِ الْمَلائِكَةُ رُوْحَ رَجُلٍ مِمَّنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ، قَالُوْا: أعَمِلْت مِنَ الْخَيْرِ شَيْئًا؟ قَالَ: كُنْتُ آمُرُ فِتْيَانِيْ أنْ يُنْظِرُوْا الْموسر وَيَتَجَاوَزُوا عَنِ الْمُعْسِرِ، قَالَ: قَالَ فَتَجاوَزُوا عَنْهُ.

٣. ورواه أيْضًا عن أبِيْ هُرَيْرَةَ، وَنَصه: كَانَ تَاجِرٌ يُدَاينُ النَّاس، فَإذَا رَأى مُعْسِرًا قَالَ لِفِتْيَانِهِ: تَجَاوَزُوا عَنْهُ، لَعَلَّ اللّٰه أنْ يَّتَجَاوَزَ عَنَّا، فَتَجَاوَزَ اللّٰه عَنْهُ.

Translation

[1. Sayyidina Huzayfah bin Al-Yaman رضى الله عنه has said

that he heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say: From the people preceding your generation, there was a man whom the angel visited to take away his soul. (After it was taken away) he was asked if he had done any good deed. He replied, "I do not remember any good deed." He was asked to think it over, and he said, "I cannot recall any save that I used to trade with people in the world and was lenient with them. I gave a respite to the rich and forgave the poor." So, Allah made him enter Paradise.]

[2. Another version narrated by Huzayfah رضی الله عنه says:

Before your time the angels took the soul of a man and asked him, "Did you do any good (in your life)?" He replied, "I used to order my employees to grant time to the rich person to pay his debts at his convenience and excuse the one who was in hard circumstances." So Allah said (to the angels), "Excuse him."]

[3. Yet another version narrated by Sayyidina Abu Hurayrah رضی الله عنه says:

A trader used to allow debts to his customers. when he found anyone hard pressed, he ordered his employees, "Forgive them! Perhaps Allah will forgive us (because of that)." So, Allah forgave him.](Bukhari#3451 and 2077, 2391. Muslim)

Explanation

When anyone is dying, he is dealt with in keeping with how he has spent his whole life. A perfect Believer is given the tidings of Paradise and Allah has said:

إِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ قَالُوْا رَبُّنَا اللّٰهُ ثُمَّ اسْتَقَامُوْا تَتَنَزَّلُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْمَلَآئِكَةُ أَنْ لاَّ تَخَافُوْا وَلَا تَحْزَنُوْا وَاَبْشِرُوْا بِالْجَنَّةِ الَّتِيْ كُنْتُمْ تُوْعَدُوْنَ۝

{Surely those who say, "Our Lord is Allah," then remain firm (in their belief), the angels descend upon them, saying, "Fear not, nor grieve; rejoice at the glad tidings of the Garden which you were promised..."} (Fussilat, 41:30)

In other words, everyone who is dying is informed how he will fare. Of course the full reckoning will take place on the Day of Gathering when reward or punishment will be awarded.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ has related to us about a man's

conversation with the angels at the time of death, or after it. He was asked to recall his pious deeds and he regretled that he remembered none, saying that he had not done any pious deed. The angels asked him to think again and answer carefully and he repeated that he knew of none of pious deeds except that he was a businessman in the world and used to give loans to various people. His debtors included rich men as well as poor and hard-pressed. He dealt with all of them with leniency and when the return was due he instructed his employees to allow some respite to the rich if they delayed repayment, and to forgo the debt of the poor and hard-pressed taking only what they willingly gave, condoning the balance. He hoped, "Would that Allah forgive us and excuse us." Allah sent him to Paradise for that.

Lessons and Messages

1. The first lesson we derive from this *Hadith* is that a creditor must show mildness to his debtors. While he has every right to receive back his money, it is better and reasonable that he is accommodating towards his debtors. Allah might be pleased with such attitude on this man's part.

2. Generally, a businessman overlooks the affairs of the Hereafter. Love for wealth and possessions, and greed makes him mindless of other realities and he lacks manners, fair-dealing and civility. This character is very prominent now-a-days. It is very common and more marked if money has been advanced or debt is receivable and the helplessness of the debtor and his straitened circumstances are not considered. Hence, if anyone gives consideration to these difficulties and is kind to his debtors then he becomes esteemed in the sight of Allah. A man who is kind and benevolent to other people over whom he has a right then Allah treats him kindly even if he has been a sinner and disobedient.

3. We can see from this *Hadith* how wide and great the mercy of Allah is. A simple act was instrumental in getting the life-long disobedience forgiven. Allah has said:

وَرَحْمَتِيْ وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ ۝

{My Mercy embraces all things.} (Al-A'raf, 7:156)

There is also a *Hadith qudsi*:

سبقت رحمتي غضبي

[My Mercy has excelled my wrath.](Muslim)

These sayings are given á practical shape in the account narrated in this *Hadith*.

4. Our earlier statement is corroborated by this case that if anyone conducts himself according to an attribute of Allah then He bestows on him what that attribute calls for. There is an example of this in the episode of the man who forgave his debtors and Allah in turn will say that He had a greater right to forgive anyone (to forgive is the attribute of Allah), "so forgive him." (version of Muslim)

Thus, we again come across the command:

تخلقوا بأخلاق الله.

"Mould yourself according to the ways of Allah."

5. The *Hadith* also supports the custom of repaying debts and loans on their due date. This procedure is current in our times too.

The Thirty-first Story

The Humblest Branch of Faith
Lesson in Social Living

First Words

Faith has more than seventy branches. The most excellent of these is to declare لاإله إلاالله "There is no god but Allah", and the humblest of the ranks is to remove a harmful thing from the road. The teaching of the Holy Prophet ﷺ is to remove injurious and harmful things from people's passage. These may be thorns, garbage, and so on. This is the lowest of the branches of faith and the last symbol of civility. This is the story of the man who earned Paradise on this simple task.

١. روى البخارى ومسلم في صحيحيهما عَنْ أَبِيْ هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَسُوْلَ اللّٰه ﷺ قَال: بَيْنَمَا رَجُلٌ يَمْشِيْ بَطَرِيْقٍ، وَجَدَ غُصْنَ شَوْكٍ عَلَى الطَّرِيْق، فَأَخَّرَهُ، فَشَكَرَ اللّٰه لَهُ فَغفَرَ لَهُ.

٢. وجاء في بعض الروايات عند مسلم عَنْ أَبِيْ هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰه ﷺ: مَرَّ رَجُلٌ بِغُصْنِ شَجَرَةٍ عَلَى ظَهْرِ طَرِيْقٍ، فَقَالَ: واللّٰه لأُنَحِّيَنَّ هَذَا عَنِ الْمُسْلِمِيْنَ لا يُؤْذِيْهِمْ، فَأُدْخِلَ الْجَنَّةَ.

٣. وفي رواية أخرى عنده عَنْ أَبِيْ هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ: لَقَدْ رَأَيْتُ رَجُلاً يَتَقَلَّبُ فِي الْجَنَّةِ، فِي شَجَرَةٍ قَطَعَهَا مِنْ ظَهْرِ الطَّرِيْق، كَانَتْ تُؤْذِي النَّاسَ.

Translation

[1. Bukhari and Muslim have transmitted in their

respective Sahih that Sayyidina Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه has said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "While a man was going on a way, he saw a thorny branch and removed it from the way and Allah became pleased with his action and forgave him for that."]

[2. The version in Muslim is that Sayyidina Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "A man while walking along the path saw the branches of a tree lying there. He thought, 'By Allah, I shall remove these from this road, so that they may not harm the Muslims, and he was admitted to Paradise."]

[3. Yet another version is that Sayyidina Abu Hurayrah رضي الله عنه quoted the Holy Prophet ﷺ as saying, "I saw a man enjoying himself in Paradise because of the tree that he cut from the path which was a source of inconvenience to the people."] (Bukhari *Hadith* # 652, 2476. Muslim # 6340, 6341)

Explanation

To remove anything that causes inconvenience to the passersby is the lowest form of faith. This means that if anyone finds an obstacle on the road and does not remove it then he deprives himself of even the lowest kind of faith

The *Hadith* teaches us that Allah forgives even those who practice the lowest form of faith. The man mentioned in the *Hadith* was forgiven for that.

There is an important lesson in this narrative for the Muslims and religious-minded people of the current era for they regard such a practice as very ordinary and commonplace.

Today, the non-Muslim people hold it as against civil behaviour to leave obstacles on common thoroughfares and inconvenience the passersby. It is worth thinking over that this teaching was first imparted by Islam which made it instrumental in getting forgiveness. Alas, today, the people of Islam, instead of removing obstacles from the road, have identified themselves with those who hurd hindrances on the roads. The position on our roads in areas where ninety percent of the residents are Muslims is that they are blocked and obstructed in different manners which cause inconvenience to the

passersby. The many ways in which road-users are put to trouble include people spitting here and there, ejecting beetle-nut after chewing it, parking motor cars before door-steps of homes and mosques, throwing rubbish on roads, draining house-hold waste on streets, and so on. This is a very common observation in our Muslim societies although it is clearly against teachings of Islam. The overflowing sewers, stinking drains, broken roads and such scenes reflect our conduct and show how we default in abiding by the teachings of Islam. It is something all of us must ponder.

Must we not think that if Allah forgives a man for removing obstacles from the road and admitting him to Paradise then will He not punish those who act against that and throw rubbish and obstacles on the road and inconvenience passersby in other ways? Surely, He will call to account these people and will punish them. The Believers must correct their behaviour for Islam does not merely teach *Salat* and fasting but it also requires its adherents to adopt excellent maners and social conduct conducive to a better civil society.

Lessons and Messages

1. The first lesson we learn is that the teachings of Islam are not limited to worship alone. Islam is not the name of a few customary forms of worship but it is a method of spending one's life in an instinctive way, being pure, having high moral character and clear thinking. It develops a proper civic sense and grows a highly civilised society.

2. It is the right of the road that pedestrians and road-users are not inconvenienced. It is not even proper to stop on the road and converse if that causes inconvenience to other people.

3. To try to protect a Muslim from inconvenience and wish well for him is a conduct that entitles one to enter into Paradise. Obviously, to remove an obstacle from the road is trying to protect a Muslim from inconvenience; it earned for that man enjoyment in Paradise. A Muslim is a well-wisher of another Muslim and he tries his best to save another Muslim from difficulty and hardship. This is what Islam teaches and this is the name of Islam.

4. If a tree is proving an obstacle on a passage then it is allowed to chop it out. If a tree provides a shade and does not inconvenience anyone then it must not be cut down.

The Thirty-second Story

The Habitual Killer

First Words

It is a serious crime to kill a man unjustly. According to the Qur'an, killing one man is like killing all mankind. One who is guilty of unjust killing is a perpetrator of the worst crime which is punished by being sent to Hell. This is the story of a man who had killed a hundred people unjustly but when the mercy of Allah knocked at his door, it opened for him the way to forgiveness and he became entitled to reward although he had not any pious deed against his name.

١. روى البخارى في صحيحه عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيْدْ الْخُدْرِيْ رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُ، عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ: كَانَ فِي بَنِيْ إِسْرَائِيْلَ رَجُلٌ قَتَلَ تِسْعَةً وَّتِسْعِيْنَ إِنْسَانًا، ثُمَّ خَرَجَ يَسْأَلُ، فَأَتَى رَاهِبًا، فَسَأَلَهُ فَقَالَ لَهُ: هَلْ مِنْ تَوْبَةٍ؟ قَالَ لا فَقَتَلَهُ.

فَجَعَلَ يَسْأَلُ، فَقَالَ لَهُ رَجُلٌ ائْتِ قَرْيَةَ كَذَا وَكَذَا، فَأَدْرَكَهُ الْمَوْتُ، فَنَاءَ بِصَدْرِهِ نَحْوَهَا، فَاخْتَصَمَتْ فِيْهِ مَلائِكَةُ الرَّحْمَةِ وَمَلائِكَةُ الْعَذَابِ، فَأَوْحَى اللّٰه إِلَى هَذِهِ أَنْ تَقَرَّبِي، وَأَوْحَى اللّٰه إِلَى هَذِهِ أَنْ تَبَاعَدِي، وَقَالَ: قِيْسُوْا مَا بَيْنَهُمَا، فَوُجِدَ إِلَى هَذِهِ أَقْرَبَ بِشِبْرٍ، فَغُفِرَ لَهُ.

٢. وَرَوَاهُ مُسلِمْ فِي صَحِيْحِهِ، عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيْدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ أَنَّ نَبِيٍّ ﷺ قَالَ: كَانَ فِيمَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ رَجُلٌ قَتَلَ تِسْعَةً وَّ تِسْعِيْنَ نَفْسًا، فَسَأَلَ عَنْ أَعْلَمِ أَهْلِ الأَرْضِ، فَدُلَّ عَلَى رَاهِبٍ، فَأَتَاهُ فَقَالَ: إِنَّهُ قَتَلَ تِسْعَةً وَّتِسْعِيْنَ نَفْسًا،

فَهَلْ لَهُ مِنْ تَوْبَةٍ؟ فَقَالَ: لا، فَقَتَلَهُ، فَكَمَّلَ بِهِ مِائَةً.

ثُمَّ سَأَلَ عَنْ أَعْلَمِ أَهْلِ الأَرْضِ، فَدُلَّ عَلَى رَجُلٍ عَالِمٍ، فَقَالَ: إِنَّهُ قَتَلَ مِائَةَ نَفْسٍ فَهَلْ لَهُ مِنْ تَوْبَةٍ؟ فَقَالَ: نَعَمْ، وَمَنْ يَحُوْلُ بَيْنَهُ وَبَيْنَ التَّوْبَةِ، انْطَلِقْ إِلَى أَرْضِ كَذَا وَكَذَا، فَإِنَّ بِهَا أُنَاسًا يَّعْبُدُوْنَ اللّٰهَ، فَاعْبُدِ اللّٰهَ مَعَهُمْ، وَلَا تَرْجِعْ إِلَى أَرْضِكَ، فَإِنَّهَا أَرْضُ سَوْءٍ.

فَانْطَلَقَ حَتَّى إِذَا نَصَفَ الطَّرِيْقَ أَتَاهُ الْمَوْتُ، فَاخْتَصَمَتْ فِيْهِ مَلَائِكَةُ الرَّحْمَةِ وَمَلَائِكَةُ الْعَذَابِ، فَقَالَتْ مَلَائِكَةُ الرَّحْمَةِ: جَاءَ تَائِبًا مُقْبِلًا بِقَلْبِهِ إِلَى اللّٰهِ، وَقَالَتْ مَلَائِكَةُ الْعَذَابِ: إِنَّهُ لَمْ يَعْمَلْ خَيْرًا قَطُّ، فَأَتَاهُمْ مَّلَكٌ فِيْ صُوْرَةِ آدَمِيٍّ، فَجَعَلُوْهُ بَيْنَهُمْ، فَقَالَ: قِيْسُوا مَا بَيْنَ الأَرْضَيْنِ، فَإِلَى أَيَّتِهِمَا كَانَ أَدْنَى فَهُوَ لَهُ، فَقَاسُوْهُ، فَوَجَدُوْهُ أَدْنَى إِلَى الأَرْضِ الَّتِيْ أَرَادَ، فَقَبَضَتْهُ مَلَائِكَةُ الرَّحْمَةِ.

Translation

[1. Bukhari has transmitted that Sayyidina Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri رضی اللہ عنہ has reported the Prophet ﷺ as saying:

There was a man from Bani Isra'il who had murdered ninety-nine persons. Then he set out asking (whether his repentance would be accepted) and he came to a monk and asked him if his repentance would be accepted. The monk replied in the negative and so he killed him too. He kept on asking till someone advised him to go to a particular village. (So he left for that village) but death overtook him on the way. As he was dying, he turned his chest towards that village (where he had hoped his repentance would be accepted). Now, the angels of mercy and the angels of punishment disputed amongst themselves about him. Allah ordered that village to come towards him and the land (from where he had set out) to move away. He then ordered the angels to measure the distances between his body and the two villages. And, he was found to be one span closer to the village (to which he was going). So, he was forgiven.]

[2. The version in Muslim reads:

There was a man before you who had killed ninety-nine persons. He then made an inquiry about the most learned scholar of the world and was directed to one monk. He came to him and told him that he had killed ninety-nine people and asked him if there was any scope for his repentance to be accepted. He said, "No!" So he killed him too and completed a hundred (killings). He again enquired about the most learned scholar on earth and was directed to one. He told him that he had killed a hundred persons and asked him if his repentance would be accepted. He said, "Yes!" Can anything stand between you and repentance? Go to such-and-such village. There are people devoted to prayer and worship and you also worship with them and do not return to the land of yours for it is an evil land." So he went away and he had hardly covered half the distance when death came to him. The angels of mercy and the angels of punishment disputed (about him). The angels of mercy said, "This man has come as a penitant and remorseful to Alalh." The angels of punishment said, "He had done no good at all." then there came another angel in the form of a man to decide between them. He said, "Measure the distance between the two lands, and he belongs to the place to which he is nearer." They measured the distances and found him nearer to the land he intended to go to. So, the angels of mercy took possession of his body.

Qatadah رحمة الله عليه said that Hasan said to him, "We were told that while he was dying, he crawled upon his chest into the land of the righteous."](Bukhari#3420. Muslim#6662)

Explanation

Besides speaking of the mercy of Allah, this *Hadith* also points out that Allah has power over all things. When He decides to bestow His mercy on anyone, He makes the components of the universe do things for that person. It seems surprising that anyone killing a hundred persons is entitled to the mercy of Allah. Someone may doubt that murder is an infringement of rights of fellow men and a murderer cannot be forgiven unless they forgive him. But the fact is

that Allah is Just and does not do injustice to anyone. He erases the sin of the person He wishes to forgive and He induces the owners of rights to forgive the violator of their rights. These things are within His power.

The monk had made the murderer lose hope of being forgiven while he was seeking means to get forgiveness. He was a monk and not a scholar and so did not know that the mercy of Allah is all-encompassing and it is an infidel's character to give up hope of His mercy. He passed judgement that the murderer could not be forgiven and the murderer thought that if he cannot get a pardon, he might as well kill one more man!

When he met the scholar, he assured him that there was no reason why he cannot be forgiven. There was no barrier between him and acceptance of his repentance. "Repent and you will be forgiven all the past", he said to the murderer. "Allah is Full of Mercy." And we may cite the words of Allah found in the Qur'an:

قُلْ يٰعِبَادِىَ الَّذِيْنَ اَسْرَفُوْا عَلٰٓى اَنْفُسِهِمْ لَاتَقْنَطُوْا مِنْ رَّحْمَةِ اللّٰهِ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ
يَغْفِرُوالذُّنُوْبَ جَمِيْعًا ۝

{Say (O Prophet): O My servants who have been prodigal against themselves, despair not of Alalh's mercy, surely Allah forgives sins altogether. Surely He is the Forgiving, the Merciful.} (Az-Zumar, 39:53)

Nevertheless, there was the condition for his repentance to be accepted that the sinner give up the sin forthwith, and go away from that land to another village where certain pious people were occupied in worship. He should join them and worship Allah. However, Allah caused him to die while he had not yet reached the village.

Lessons and Messages

This story has many lessons and messages for the slaves of Allah. Those who have found themselves entangled in the net of the devil and their own base desires and hence are submerged in the quicksand of sin should see a ray of hope in this story. Each part of this story has many a lesson in it.

1. We see that Allah's Mercy is great. It is so great that it wipes

out sins committed over a whole life if the sinner repents sincerely and with a true heart.

2. We must never despair of the mercy of Allah or give up hope. To despair of His mercy is to disbelieve in Him. If the sins of all people are collected together, they cannot stay against a drop of His mercy.

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ وَاسِعُ الْمَغْفِرَةِ

{Surely your Lord is of vast forgiveness} (An-Najm, 53:32)

وَرَحْمَتِي وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ

{My mercy embraces all things} (Al-A'raf, 7: 156)

3. A scholar excels a worshipper. This is corroborated by this *Hadith*. A worshipper who has no knowledge is superceded by a scholar though he may not have as many righteous deeds to his credit if he guides the people with the knowledge Allah has bestowed on him. Many lives would be reformed by the proper guidance that He provides to other people while the worshipper who has no knowledge will do everything only for himself.

We have seen in the narrative that the monk who was a devoted worshipper but not a scholar caused the murderer to despair of all hope while the scholar guided him correctly and encouraged him to repent to Allah. Indeed, knowledge is useful in this way and the scholars are able to go to depths of truth.

4. The punishment against intentional murder is consignment to Hell but if the murderer repents then he is safe from the punishment. It is the belief of the adherents of *sunnah* that every sin is capable of being forgiven except polytheism.

5. It is the characteristic of scholars that they do not merely teach the commands to the people but they also train them how they must observe the commands. The scholar in the story not only told the murderer that his repentance was possible but also directed him on what he should do He taught the command and the way to observe it.

6. Even the angels do not know the unseen and their thinking also varies from one to another. On the face of it the angels of punishment seemed to be correct but the angels of mercy took the body because mercy was overwhelming.

7. It is the duty of the scholars to teach the commands of

Shari'ah to the people and to put them on the path of repentance and guidance.

It does not imply that they should prescribe the punishment on the guilty. The scholar heard the murderer confess having slain one hundred people but he did not prescribe the punishment on him. Rather, he induced him to make a repentance and showed him the correct way to salvation. This, in fact, is the office of the scholars. To effect the punishment is the duty of the rulers.

The Thirty-third Story

The Recovery of a Lost She-Camel Compared to a Slave's Repentance

First Words

If in the loneliness of the desert a traveller loses his she-camel loaded with all his provision and belongings, how would he feel? Every sensible person can imagine his plight. Then, after he has abandoned all hope and death stares him in the face, the lost camel returns and his happiness will know no bounds....

Thus, when a lost slave relents and repents to Allah, His happiness and pleasure far exceed the happiness of the cameleer. Who had lost heart and was on the verge of death until the camel and life were restored to him.

روى مسلم في صحيحه عَنْ سِمَاكٍ قَالَ: خَطَبَ النُّعْمَانُ بْنُ بَشِيْرٍ، فَقَالَ: لَلَّهُ أَشَدُّ فَرَحًا بِتَوْبَةِ عَبْدِهِ مِنْ رَجُلٍ حَمَلَ زَادَهُ وَمَزَادَهُ عَلَى بَعِيْرٍ ثُمَّ سَارَ، حَتَّى كَانَ بِفَلاةٍ مِنَ الأَرْضِ، فَأَدْرَكَتْهُ الْقَائِلَةُ، فَنَزَلَ فَقَالَ تَحْتَ شَجَرَةٍ، فَغَلَبَتْهُ عَيْنُهُ وَانْسَلَّ بَعِيْرُهُ، فَاسْتَيْقَظَ فَسَعَى شَرَفًا فَلَمْ يَرَ شَيْئًا، ثُمَّ سَعَى شَرَفًا ثَانِيًا فَلَمْ يَرَ شَيْئًا، ثُمَّ سَعَى شَرَفًا ثَالِثًا فَلَمْ يَرَ شَيْئًا، فَأَقْبَلَ حَتَّى أَتَى مَكَانَهُ الَّذِيْ قَالَ فِيْهِ، فَبَيْنَمَا هُوَ قَاعِدٌ إِذْ جَاءَهُ بَعِيْرُهُ يَمْشِي حَتَّى وَضَعَ خِطَامَهُ فِي يَدِهِ، فَلَلَّهُ أَشَدُّ فَرَحًا بِتَوْبَةِ الْعَبْدِ مِنْ هَذَا حِيْنَ وَجَدَ بَعِيْرَهُ عَلَى حَالِهِ.

قَالَ سِمَاكٌ: فَزَعَمَ الشَّعْبِيُّ أَنَّ النُّعْمَانَ رَفَعَ هَذَا الْحَدِيْثَ إِلَى النَّبِيِّ ﷺ وَأَمَّا أَنَا فَلَمْ أَسْمَعْهُ.

Translation

[Muslim has transmitted this *Hadith* from Simak رحمة الله عليه who said that once Nu'man bin Bashir رضى الله عنه addressed them saying, Allah is more pleased with the repentance of a believing servant than that person is (whose story we relate here). He went out on a journey with a provision of food and drink on the back of his camel. He went on until he reached a waterless desert and felt sleepy. He got down under the shade of a tree and was overcome by sleep. His camel ran away. When he got up, he tried to see (his camel) from a mound but could not find it. He then ascended another mound but could not see anything. Then he climbed upon a third mound but could not locate him. He came back to the place where he had been previously. And as he was sitting (in utter disappointment), there came to him the camel and placed its nosestring in his hand. Allah is more pleased with the repentance of His slave than the person who found (his lost camel) in this very state.

Simak said that Sha'bi was of the opinion that Nu'man traced the *Hadith* to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ. Simak, however did not hear that himself.](Muslim#6616. Bukhari#6308)

Explanation

In the olden days, horses and camels were used as riding animals but the camel was preferred while journeying through the deserts. They placed all their luggage including provision on the camel's back and depended entirely on this animal in the desert. So, if it was lost that spelled death for the owner.

The same thing happened to this man. When he felt sleepy, he broke journey and had a nap in the shade of a tree. When he awoke, the camel around whom centered his life was missing. He searched for it on three sides for some distance but did not find it. Tired, he came back to his place under the tree and was very disappointed.... Suddenly, as he raised his head–what did he see? The camel with all his belongings stood before him and hung down its nosestring in his hands! His happiness knew no bounds.

According to some versions, he was so lost in happiness that he cried out, "O Allah! You are my slave and I Your Lord!" (May Allah

protect us from such thinking.)

Allah is more pleased with His repenting slave than this man was on receiving back his camel.

Lessons and Messages

1. This *Hadith* basically tells us of the merits of repentance. It is something that pleases Allah Who bestows mercy on the repenting slave. The Arabic word *tawbah* means 'to turn to', 'to repent', 'to relent'. The slave who makes the *tawbah* calls his Lord and He turns to him in mercy.

2. The *Hadith* also confirms that Allah becomes pleased and happy. What does that mean? No one knows how is that but it is certain that His pleasure is not like the pleasure of His slaves. It is as behoves His grand Being.

We must remember that references in the *Ahadith* to His attributes which are associated with man must be understood as is fitting to His Being. For instances, there are references to His hands, feet, laughing and so on. We must believe that these characteristics when applied to Him are according to His nature and not as we are used to them.

3. A man must remain careful always and protect his belongings. He must not be negligent of these things because his possessions are bounties of Allah and they are among his necessities. This man had gone to sleep without tying his camel who trotted away. This caused him anxiety. Hence, it is necessary to protect one's possession and *Shari'ah* also demands of us to do that.

4. The words that this man uttered when he got back his camel were wrong and resembled a disbeliever's speech. However, he had spoken them when he was not in his proper senses because of his excessive joy and they were spoken involuntarily. We have mentioned them here only to impress upon the readers this man's joyful condition. In that state, he had lost presence of mind. However, these are very wrong words and it is possible that he might have realised his mistake later on and sought the forgiveness of Allah (for the wrong words).

5. We also learn from here that imitation of disbelief is not (the same thing as) disbelief. That is, to repeat words of disbelief to

allude to something, or as an example, does not amount to disbelief. In the Qur'an itself, Allah has frequently quoted the grave disbelieving words of the disbelievers, for example:

قَالُوْا إِنَّ اللّٰهَ فَقِيْرٌ وَّنَحْنُ اَغْنِيَآءُ

{They said, "Allah is poor and we are rich."} (Aal Imran, 3:181)

Nevertheless, it is better for us to exercise restraint when citing such words of the disbelievers. And, after referring to them, we must immediately express our dissociation with these words by seeking refuge with Allah, for example:

نعوذ بالله–العياذ بالله

(We seek the protection of Allah).

﴿ وإذا تليت عليهم آياته زادتهم إيمانا ﴾

(And when His Revelations are Recited to them, they Increase them in Faith)

(Al-Anfal, 8: 21)

PART FOUR

Lesson-Bearing Happenings that Strengthen Faith and Belief

The Thirty-fourth Story

Secret Help Discharges Obligation

First Words

If a man resolves to do anything and does all in his power towards achieving his aim then Allah opens avenues for him towards that end. It is very important to give the rights of fellow-men. This is the case of a man who fulfilled his obligation to repay his debt and though he had not the means he did all in his power to clear the debt. Allah demonstrated His unseen help and everyone realised that if one is sincere in his intention then his task is made easy.

روى البخارى في صحيحه عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُ عَنْ رَسُوْلِ اللّٰه ﷺ: أَنَّهُ ذَكَرَ رَجُلا مِنْ بَنِيْ إِسْرَائِيْلَ سَأَلَ بَعْضَ بَنِيْ إِسْرَائِيْلَ أَنْ يُسْلِفَهُ أَلْفَ دِيْنَارٍ، فَقَالَ: ائْتِنِيْ بِالشُّهَدَاءِ أُشْهِدُهُمْ، فَقَالَ: كَفَى بِاللّٰهِ شَهِيْدًا، قَالَ: فَأْتِنِيْ بِالْكَفِيْلِ، قَالَ: كَفَى بِاللّٰهِ كَفِيْلاً، قَالَ: صَدَقْتَ.

فَدَفَعَهَا إِلَيْهِ عَلَى أَجَلٍ مُسَمًّى، فَخَرَجَ فِي الْبَحْرِ، فَقَضَى حَاجَتَهُ، ثُمَّ الْتَمَسَ مَرْكَبًا يَرْكَبُهَا يَقْدَمُ عَلَيْهِ لِلأَجَلِ الَّذِيْ أَجَّلَهُ، فَلَمْ يَجِدْ مَرْكَبًا، فَأَخَذَ خَشَبَةً، فَنَقَرَهَا فَأَدْخَلَ فِيْهَا أَلْفَ دِيْنَارٍ، وَصَحِيْفَةً مِنْهُ إِلَى صَاحِبِهِ، ثُمَّ زَجَّجَ مَوْضِعَهَا، ثُمَّ أَتَى بِهَا إِلَى الْبَحْرِ.

فَقَالَ: اللّٰهُمَّ إِنَّكَ تَعْلَمُ أَنِّي كُنْتُ تَسَلَّفْتُ فُلَانًا أَلْفَ دِيْنَارٍ، فَسَأَلَنِي كَفِيْلا، فَقُلْتُ: كَفَى بِا للّٰهِ كَفِيْلاً، فَرَضِيَ بِكَ، وَسَأَلَنِي شَهِيْدًا، فَقُلْتُ: كَفَى

بِاللّٰهِ شَهِيْدًا، فَرَضِيَ بِكَ، وَأَنِّي جَهَدْتُ أَنْ أَجِدَ مَرْكَبًا أَبْعَثُ إِلَيْهِ الَّذِيْ لَهُ، فَلَمْ أَقْدِرْ، وَإِنِّي أَسْتَوْدِعُكَهَا.

فَرَمَى بِهَا فِي الْبَحْرِ حَتَّى وَلَجَتْ فِيْهِ، ثُمَّ انْصَرَفَ، وَهُوَ فِي ذَالِكَ يَلْتَمِسُ مَرْكَبًا، يَخْرُجُ إِلَى بَلَدِهِ، فَخَرَجَ الرَّجُلُ الَّذِيْ كَانَ أَسْلَفَهُ يَنْظُرُ لَعَلَّ مَرْكَبًا قَدْ جَاءَ بِمَالِهِ، فَإِذَا بِالْخَشَبَةِ الَّتِي فِيْهَا الْمَالُ، فَأَخَذَهَا لأَهْلِهِ حَطَبًا، فَلَمَّا نَشَرَهَا، وَجَدَ الْمَالَ وَالصَّحِيْفَةَ.

ثُمَّ قَدِمَ الَّذِي كَانَ أَسْلَفَهُ، فَأَتَى بِالأَلْفِ دِيْنَار، فَقَالَ: وَاللّٰه مَا زِلْتُ جَاهِدًا فِي طَلَبِ مَرْكَبٍ لآتِيَكَ بِمَالِكَ فَمَا وَجَدْتُ مَرْكَبًا قَبْلَ الَّذِيْ أَتَيْتُ فِيْهِ، قَالَ: هَلْ كُنْتَ بَعَثْتَ إِلَيَّ بِشَيْءٍ؟ قَالَ: أُخْبِرُكَ أَنِّي لَمْ أَجِدْ مَرْكَبًا قَبْلَ الَّذِيْ جِئْتُ فِيْهِ، قَالَ: فَإِنَّ اللّٰه قَدْ أَدَّى عَنْكَ الَّذِي بَعَثْتَ فِي الْخَشَبَةِ، فَانْصَرِفْ بِالأَلْفِ الدِّيْنَارِ رَاشِدًا.

Translation

[Sayyidina Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه has said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ mentioned a man of the Bani Isra'il, saying, "He asked another Isra'ili to lend him one thousand dinar. He asked him to bring witnesses but the borrower said, "Allah is suficient as a witness." The lender asked him to furnish a surety but the borrower again asserted, "Allah is sufficient as a surety." The lender agreed, "You are correct", and lent him the money for a specified period. The debtor went across the sea. When he had finished his work, he looked for a conveyance to take him back in time for the repayment of the debt. But he did not find any conveyance. So he took a piece of wood and made a hole in it. He inserted in it the one thousand dinar and a letter to the lender and closed the hole tightly. He took the piece of wood to the sea and said, "O Allah, You know well that I took a loan of one thousand dinar from so-and-so. He demanded a surety from me but I told him that Allah's surety was enough and he accepted Your guarantee. He then

demanded a witness and I told him that Allah was sufficient as a witness. No doubt, I have tried much to find a conveyance so that I might pay back his money but could not find, so I hand over this money to you." Saying that, he threw the piece of wood into the sea till it went far out into it, and then he went away. Meanwhile, he kept looking for a conveyance to take him to the lender's place. One day the lender came out of his house to see whether a ship had arrived bringing his money, and all of a sudden he saw a piece of wood in which was the money. He took it home to use as fire-wood. When he sawed it, he found his money and the letter inside it. Shortly after that, the debtor came with one thousand dinar to him and said, "By Allah, I had been trying much to get a boat so that I could bring you your money but failed to get one before the one I have come by." The lender asked, "Have you sent something to me?" The borrower replied, "I have said to you that I could not get a boat besides the one I have come by." The lender said, "Allah has delivered on you behalf the money you sent in the piece of wood. So you may keep your one thousand dinar and go, guided on the right path."] (Bukhari, *Hadith* # 2291)

Explanation

This is a very amazing incident. It reflects on the powers of Allah and also points out the sincerity of the two men concerned.

In the ancient times, people generally borrowed money from one another and also travelled to other places for their business. One of them requested the other to advance to him a loan and he agreed to advance it if he brought witnesses. The first person did not have any witness but suggested that Allah Who is everywhere and sees everything should be taken as a witness. The second man agreed to that and asked for a guarantor and again the first suggested that Allah was sufficient as a Guarantor.

The second man agreed to that, saying that he spoke the truth. Both men were sincere and truthful and both concurred with each other. Thus, the lender advanced a loan to the borrower.

The borrower had to go to another town to attend to some work, so he went there by boat. When the time to return the loan

approached, he could not find a boat for the return journey although he tried his best to get one. He had to return the money on time but could not find a transport to the other town.

He was sincere at heart and decided to implement a novel plan his mind had devised. He took a piece of wood and made a crevice in it and placed therein the money (a thousand dinars) and a letter to the lender and sealed the opening. He then prayed to Allah in these words:

> "O Allah! I have done whatever I could to remit the money to the creditor at the specified time. I do not have in my hands anything beyond that. I place this trust in Your hands and You know that I am not untruthful in this regard. O Allah! Cause it to go into the hands of its owner safely."

He then cast the piece of wood into the sea. The sincere mind of the two people—the large-hearted lender and the honest borrower—pleased Allah and He let the piece of wood reach the lender. At the specified time, he came to the sea-shore to see if a boat had brought the borrower. He waited for some time but no boat arrived, so he gve up hope of any boat coming that day. Suddenly, he observed the piece of wood floating on water towards him. He thought to himself that he might as well take it home and use it for fuel. He took it home and handed it over to his family members. When it was being sawed, they found a thousand dinars inside with a letter addressed to him. He was now content on receiving back his money, the affair was over.

Some days later, the borrower made his appearance before the creditor with the thousand dinars. He had supposed that the piece of wood had not reached the creditor. He explained to him that he had been trying his best to find a boat but none was available and he could not return the money on the agreed date. He told him that he had brought the money and gave it to him but made no mention of the piece of wood.

But the creditor was also an honest man. He could have refrained from disclosing the receipt of the wooden piece and the money for no one had seen him get it, but he asked, "Did you send anything to me?" The other man insisted, "I have told you that I could not find conveyance before that." He did not again speak of

the piece of wood. The creditor then disclosed that he had received the piece of wood with its contents and his due was thus received by him. He asked the borower to keep what he had brought with him and go back happily.

Lessons and Messages

This is an interesting incident and it also provides many lessons to us. It reflects an eye-opening insight on our common loss of good sense and feeling. We may try to convince ourselves that we live a civilised life but in fact we lead a meaningless, greedy life, individually as well as collectively.

1. Allah has placed the responsibility of one man's need on another. But man is so selfish that he will not help another man unless he derives some benefit from him. The command of Allah is there, nevertheless, that when a fellow-man comes, to us to get his need fulfilled, we must do our utmost to solve his difficulty. If anyone comes to borrow money and we have the means then we must lend him what he wants.

The *Shari'ah* requires us to support monetary transactions with witnesses and guarantors, and this is customary in our everyday life too. However, it may happen sometimes this is not possible and the lender finds it difficult to make a decision while the borrower cannot give him a satisfactory assurance. The central point of the narrative is that both men, the lender and the borrower, were honest and sincere in their intention.

It is honesty and sincerity that made the borrower to offer the witness and guarantee of Allah and the lender to accept it.

It is honesty that made the borrower restless when the time of repayment was near and it drove him to contrive a crude manner of remitting money. In the final analysis, though it was a crude idea, it was prompted by honesty.

Honest as he was, he could not convince himself that the money was received by the creditor. So, he brought again a like sum of money in cash and handed it over to the creditor.

Again, it was the same honesty that prompted the creditor to confirm that he had received the money already although nothing prevented him from pocketing another payment.

We learn, therefore, that if our intentions are true and there is no mischief in our hearts then such examples of honesty will be common in our lives.

2. It is virtuous and rewarding to advance loan to a needy person.

3. It is the duty of the borrower to repay the debt at the specified time and not put the creditor to inconvenience and mental worry.

4. If reliance is placed on Allah when mutual dealings are finalised then great blessings accrue, and Allah is enough to one who trusts Him.

وَمَنْ يَّتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللّٰهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهٗ ٥

{And whosoever puts his trust in Allah, so He will suffice him.} (At-Talaq, 65:3)

5. It is imperative that we must make sure that the owner receives his right and we must then confirm whether he has received it or not. It is not enough to merely remit it, for sometimes our remittance does not reach him. It is the responsibility of the debtor to find out if the owner has actually received it. The borrower had followed this principle in the foregoing narrative. But Allah alone knows best.

The Thirty-fifth Story

A Believer's Intention is Superior to His Action

First Words

A *Hadith* of the Holy Prophet ﷺ tells us. "A Believer's intention is superior to his deed." Every deed is aptly performed at its proper place and time but if it is not performed properly then no significance is attached to it. Thus, to undertake social service at the time of *Salat*, and forgo it, is not an act of worship. In the same way, charity is given only to him who is entitled to it otherwise it is not recognised as virtuous by *Shari'ah*. However, Allah recognises the intention behind every deed. Hence, sometimes, a wrong deed receives approval only because it was prompted by a sincere intention. This narrative tells us of a man who paid his *sadaqah* (charity) to a wrong man but his intention was very sincere.

روى البخارى عن أبي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللّٰه عَنْهُ أنَّ رَسُوْلَ اللّٰه ﷺ: قَالَ:

قَالَ رَجُلٌ لأَتَصَدَّقَنَّ، بِصَدَقَةٍ فَخَرَجَ بِصَدَقَتِهِ، فَوَضَعَهَا فِي يَدِ سَارِقٍ، فَأَصْبَحُوْا يَتَحَدَّثُوْنَ: تُصُدِّقَ عَلَى سَارِقٍ.

فَقَالَ: اللّٰهُمَّ لَكَ الْحَمْدُ، لأَتَصَدَّقَنَّ بِصَدَقَةٍ، فَخَرَجَ بِصَدَقَتِهِ، فَوَضَعَهَا فِي يَدَيْ زَانِيَةٍ، فَأَصْبَحُوْا يَتَحَدَّثُوْنَ: تُصُدِّقَ اللَّيْلَةَ عَلَى زَانِيَةٍ، فَقَالَ: اللّٰهُمَّ لَكَ الْحمْدُعَلَى زَانِيَةٍ! لأَتَصَدَّقَنَّ بِصَدَقَةٍ.

فَخَرَجَ بِصَدَقَتِهِ، فَوَضَعَهَا فِي يَدَيْ غَنِيٍّ، فَأَصْبَحُوْا يَتَحَدَّثُوْنَ: تُصُدِّقَ عَلَى غَنِيٍّ، فَقَالَ: اللّٰهُمَّ لَكَ الْحَمْدُ، عَلَى سَارِقٍ، وَعَلَى زَانِيَةٍ، وَعَلَى غَنِيٍّ!

فَأُتِيَ، فَقِيْلَ لَهُ: أَمَّا صَدَقَتُكَ عَلَى سَارِق فَلَعَلَّهُ أَنْ يَّسْتَعِفَّ عَنْ سَرِقَتِهِ، وَأَمَّا الزَّانِيَةُ فَلَعَلَّهَا أَنْ تَسْتَعِفَّ عَنْ زِنَاهَا، وَأَمَّا الْغَنِيُّ فَلَعَلَّهُ يَعْتَبِرُ، فَيُنْفِقُ مِمَّا أَعْطَاهُ اللّٰهُ.

Translation

[It is narrated by Sayyidina Abu Hurayrah رضی اللہ عنہ that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: A man said (to himself) that he would give some charity. He went out with this object and (unknowingly) gave it to a thief. Next morning, the people said that someone had given charity to a thief. (On hearing that) he said, "O Allah! All praise and thanks are for You. I will give alms again." So, he again went out with his alms and (unknowingly) gave it to an adulteress. Next morning the people commented that charity had been given to an adulteress in the night. The man said, "O Allah! All praise and thanks are for You. I gave charity to an adulteress! Surely, I will give charity again." So, he went out with his alms again and (unknowingly) gave it to a rich man. Next morning, there was talk again that someone had given alms to a rich man.

He said, "O Allah! All praise and gratitude is for You. (I had given charity) to a thief, an adulteress and a wealthy man."

Then someone came to him (in a dream, perhaps) and said, "The charity that you gave to the thief might make him abstain from stealing (why should he steal if he gets help from unseen sources?). The alms given to the adulteress might stop her from adultery (she too might repent if she relies on unseen help). The wealthy man who was given charity might take a lesson and spend the wealth that Allah has given him in Allah's cause (seeing that someone spends it secretly)."](Bukhari# 1421. Muslim)

Exlanation

To spend in the cause of Allah and to give charity is very much dear to Allah. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ has narrated the account of a man who was given to spend in Allah's way, and he had resolved to give charity to gain is pleasure. Different people are driven by different pious ambitions. Some men occupy themselves

in supererogatory *Salat*. Some observe voluntary fasts. Some devote themselves to service to humanity and some give charity generously.

Generally, man loves wealth very much. Hence, it is very dear to Allah if anyone spends liberally in His Cause. Further, the more one spends secretly, the more sincere it is and thus more worthy of approval by Allah. This man had resolved to spend in the darkness of the night so that no one could observe him not even the receiver. Undoubtedly, his intention was very praiseworthy but Allah willed that when he doled out the charity he placed it on the hands of a thief. He could not know in the darkness of the night whether he was giving charity to a deserving person or not. In the morning, people began to talk that someone had given charity in the night to a thief.

When he heard it, he felt very sorry that he had intended to give charity for the sake of Allah but he had given it to a wrong man. So, he praised Allah and resolved to repeat the charity in the night. Again, he placed the money in wrong hands—it was an adulteress this time. Again, people remarked in the morning that an adulteress was paid charity in the night by someone. He felt sorry and pained at his mistake but he praised Allah and resolved again to give charity in the night. He went out in the night and this time he happened to place the money in the hands of a wealthy person who was not entitled to receive charity. There was again talk among the people that someone had given charity to a rich man in the night although it was not proper to do so.

This grieved the man very much and he thought that he had committed a blunder on all three nights. Instead of offering his charity to a deserving person, he had been paying it to non-entitled people for three consecutive nights. He lamented that his charity was wasted. In this state, sleep overtook him and he dreamt that someone told him:

"There was wisdom in the charity going to a thief. The wisdom lay in the possibility that the thief might repent and reform—when he sees that he gets his livelihood without having to steal. He might place his trust on Allah and repent from stealing.

The same thing might be said about the adulteress who might also repent and reform. She might trust Allah to provide her

livelihood without her having to sell her body.

The wisdom in the charity going into the hands of a wealthy man was that perhaps it might dawn on him to spend likewise in the cause of Allah.

Hence, do not feel sorry. All your three donations are approved and accepted by Allah."

Certainly, man cannot fathom the wisdom behind a deed. He may suppose that something is wrong and against *Shari'ah* but Allah may have placed several blessings in it. This man had paid charity honestly and with a sincere intention but it went into wrong hands unknowingly. Of course, it is not allowed to give *sadaqah* (charity) to wrong people intentionally. If anyone knows that a man is not deserving in the eyes of *Shari'ah* then it is wrong to pay charity to him.

Something similar to it had occured in the times of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. It is transmitted by Muslim in his Sahih.

> "Sayyidina Yazid bin Akhnas رضی الله عنه once gave some dinars to a man in the mosque with instructions to give them to a deserving person. After some time Ma'n, the son of Yazid, came to the mosque (and this man gave them to Ma'n). Ma'n took the money and he did not know that his father had set them aside for charity. He took the money to his father who, when he learnt the details, disallowed him to take the money. He said, 'By Allah, I did not intend to give these dinars to you.' Ma'n took the case to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ who gave his verdict and said, 'O Yazid! You had formed an intention and got the reward against it. And, O Ma'n! What you have taken is yours'." (Muslim)

In other words, Yazid رضی الله عنه got the reward against his intention to pay *sadaqah* (charity) for he had not intended that his money go to his son. What Ma'n got was received unknowingly and so it was proper for him. He had not received it as charity (or *sadaqah*).

Lessons and Messages

1. It is really the intention behind deeds that is counted in the sight of Allah. Of course, the visible signs of the deed are also

considered. In cases of deeds prescribed by *Shari'ah* both are observed, the intention and the practical deed. The outward execution of a righteous deed should conform to the demands of *Shari'ah* and the intention too should be formed in a correct manner. If either of the two lacks sincerity, the reward against the deed will be lost.

Sometimes, the outward appearance of deeds does not match the dictates of *Shari'ah* and one gets the impression that they are contradictory to *Shari'ah*. However, in reality they appear against *Shari'ah* because of some reasons known to Allah and their true test of authenticity is found in the intention prompting them. This is what is meant by the saying of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, نية المؤمن خير من عمله "The intention of a Believer is better (or superior) to his deed." Sometimes, a man's intentions are lofty and sincere but his deeds lack perfection. Allah rewards him on the purity of his intentions.

2. It is better to give *sadaqah* in secret because that leaves no room for ostentation. However, it is also proper to give it publicly if there is a reason for that.

3. Sometimes man intends to do something but the consequences are what he had not thought of at all. Allah sees what His slave had meant and rewards accordingly as we saw in the case of a thief, adulteress and wealthy man receiving charity.

4. True dreams are *good tiding*. They are a forty-sixth part of Prophethood. This man's dream was one of those and it disclosed to him that his *sadaqah* was approved and his sadness was thus removed.

The Thirty-sixth Story

A Jar Full of Gold Finds no Claimant

First Words

In our greedy world, we often come across new ideas of ways to satisfy greed. Man presents different excuses, does unbelievable things and commits unimaginable fraud to amass wealth. We learn of these things every day. Then, will this account of disinterest for wealth reform us? Surely, it would.... but for it would reform only him who reads it with sincere belief.

روى البخارى ومسلم في صحيحيهما عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ ﷺ: اشْتَرَى رَجُلٌ مِنْ رَجُلٍ عَقَارًا لَهُ، فَوَجَدَ الرَّجُلُ الَّذِي اشْتَرَى الْعَقَارَ فِي عَقَارِهِ جَرَّةً فِيْهَا ذَهَبٌ، فَقَالَ لَهُ الَّذِي اشْتَرَى الْعَقَارَ: خُذْ ذَهَبَكَ مِنِّي، إِنَّمَا اشْتَرَيْتُ مِنْكَ الأَرْضَ، وَلَمْ أَبْتَعْ مِنْكَ الذَّهَبَ.

وَقَالَ الَّذِي لَهُ الأَرْضُ: إِنَّمَا بِعْتُكَ الأَرْضَ وَمَا فِيْهَا، فَتَحَاكَمَا إِلَى رَجُلٍ، فَقَالَ الَّذِيْ تَحَاكَمَا إِلَيْهِ: أَلَكُمَا وَلَدٌ؟ قَالَ أَحْدُهُمَا: لِي غُلامٌ، وَقَالَ الآخَرُ: لِي جَارِيَةٌ، قَالَ: أَنْكِحُوا الْغُلامَ الْجَارِيَةَ، وَأَنْفِقُوْا عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمَا مِنْهُ وَتَصدَّقَا.

Translation

[Sayyidina Abu Hurayrah رضی اللہ عنہ has quoted the Holy Prophet ﷺ as saying: A man bought a piece of land from another man and the buyer found an earthenware jar filled with gold under the ground. The buyer said to the seller, "Take your

gold, as I have bought only the land from you and I have not bought the gold from you." The (former) owner of the land said, "I have sold you the land with everything in it." So both of them took their case before a man who asked, "Do you have children?" One of them said, "I have a son." The other said, "I have a daughter." The man said, Marry the girl to the boy and spend the money on both of them and give the rest of it in charity."] (Bukhari # 3472, Muslim # 4271)

Explanation

It is man's nature to love and crave for property and riches, gold and silver and the possessions of the world. Allah has said in the Qur'an:

زُيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ حُبُّ الشَّهَوَاتِ مِنَ النِّسَآءِ وَالْبَنِيْنَ وَالْقَنَاطِيْرِ الْمُقَنْطَرَةِ مِنَ الذَّهَبِ وَالْفِضَّةِ وَالْخَيْلِ الْمُسَوَّمَةِ وَالْاَنْعَامِ وَالْحَرْثِ٥

{Alluring is made to men the love of pleasures (that come) from women, sons, and hoarded treasures of gold and silver, and well-bred horses, cattle and tillage...}

The nature of man cannot change and it is neither possible nor demanded that man give up this love. However, it is required of him that he make his love for these things subservient to the love of Allah. He must prefer the command of Allah to his love for these things. Hence, he must desist from those ways of earning wealth which Allah has disallowed even if he can earn profusely from those sources. But, it is this wealth and these possessions for the sake of which man neglects Allah and His commands. It is his craze for wealth, woman and land that has created corruption and mischief all over. It has created mutual jealousy, hatred and enmity. It has obliterated the distinction between lawful and unlawful in the minds of people. It has caused men to fight one another and shed blood.

If in such an atmosphere of love for wealth and possessions anyone restrains himself from the unlawful and doubtful for fear of Allah then he seems to be an extraordinary person. He would indeed be regarded highly in the sight of Allah.

Similarly, the conduct of the men in the *Hadith* is exemplary. Each one of them refused to take possession of the vessel filled with gold because he believed it belonged really to the other. They were

unwilling to take it even when offered because each thought that it did not belong to him. These were indeed extraordinary men.

Both buyer and seller showed exemplary conduct. The buyer said that he found the jar while digging the land and so it belonged to the seller for he had bought the land only not the jar. The seler said that it did not belong to him because he had already sold the land and whatever was on it went with it. Both were unwilling to take the gold and, of course, all of it could not be thrown away. They, therefore, turned to a third person to arbitrate who found a solution for them.

He asked them if they had any children and it turned out that one of them had a male offspring and the other a female offspring. So, this man ruled that they should be married together, and the wealth should be spent equally on both of them and something should be given away in charity.

The arbitrator had given a very commendable decision. He had concluded that since the two men were very honest, their children too should be like them. When they marry, their offspring would turn out to be very noble and righteous.

Lessons and Messages

There is much to learn from this narrative for our greedy societies.

1. Honesty is an auspicious quality which Allah rewards in this world and will reward heavily in the next.

2. It encourages us to be disinterested in worldly possessions.

3. It is *taqwa* to keep away from the unlawful and the doubtful. Both the men had the characteristic of *taqwa* and that is why both of them argued with each other and refused to retain the property.

4. This narrative also tells us that we must refer to a third person as an arbitrator whenever there is a disagreement among ourselves on minor or major matters in our every day life. Such an arbitrator should be a knowledgeable person who may decide on the basis of his intelligence and knowledge and experience.

5. It is *mustahabb* to set aside something from wealth or assets acquired unexpectedly. This effaces inauspiciousness in wealth.

The Thirty-seventh Story

Jurayj Al-Abid.... Mother's Curse

First Words

Jurayj was a man of the Bani Isra'il. He was a deeply devoted worshipper and an ascetic. He was engaged in worship all the time. But a man's worship is not enough for him if he is not learned and lacks knowledge. If a man does not have proper knowledge then he is constantly in danger of going astray. Thus, it was lack of sufficient knowledge that became a severe trial for Jurayj.

How was that? Why was he tried? How did he come out of the trial? This lesson giving narrative answers all these questions.

روى البخارى في صحيحه عن أبي هُرَيْرَةَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ: لَمْ يَتَكَلَّمْ فِي الْمَهْدِ إِلا ثَلاثَةٌ: عِيْسَى، وَكَانَ فِي بَنِيْ إِسْرَائِيْلَ رَجُلٌ يُقَالُ لَهُ: جُرَيْجٌ، كَانَ يُصَلِّي فَجَاءَ تْهُ أُمُّهُ فَدَعَتْهُ، فَقَالَ: أُجِيْبُهَا أَوْ أُصَلِّي، فَقَالَتِ: اللَّهُمَّ لا تُمِتْهُ حَتَّى تُرِيَهُ وُجُوْهَ الْمُومِسَاتِ، وَكَانَ جُرَيجٌ فِي صَوْمَعَتِهِ، فَتَعَرَّضَتْ لَهُ امْرَأَةٌ، وَكَلَّمَتْهُ، فَأَبَى، فَأَتَتْ رَاعِيًا فَأَمْكَنَتْهُ مِنْ نَفْسِهَا، فَوَلَدَتْ غُلامًا، فَقَالَتْ: مِنْ جُرَيْجٍ، فَأَتَوْهُ، فَكَسَرُوا صَوْمَعَتَهُ، وَأَنْزَلُوْهُ، وَسَبُّوْهُ، فَتَوَضَّأَ، وَصَلَّى، ثُمَّ أَتَى الْغُلامَ، فَقَالَ: مَنْ أَبُوْكَ يَا غُلامُ؟ قَالَ: الرَّاعِي، قَالُوْا: نَبْنِي صَوْمَعَتَكَ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ، قَالَ: لا إِلا مِنْ طِيْنٍ.

Translation

[Sayyidina Abu Hurayrah رضی الله عنه said that the Prophet ﷺ said: None spoke in the cradle but three: 'Isa, Jurayj. While he

[1] (The third was the child of a lady of Bani Isra'il......) we have seen this in an earlier narrative. Story 23, "A Newborn Child Speaks in the Cradle."

was offering *Salat*, asked (himself), "Shall I answer her or keep on offering *Salat*." (He went on offering *Salat* and did not answer her). His mother said, "O Allah! Do not let him die till he sees the faces of prostitutes."

So, while Jurayj was in his hermitage, a lady came and sought to seduce him, but he refused. So, she went to a shepherd and presented herself to him to commit illegal sexual intercourse with her and then later on she gave birth to a child and claimed that it belonged to Jurayj. The people, therefore, came to him and dismantled his hermitage and expelled him out of it and abused him. Jurayj performed the ablution and offered *Salat*. He then came to the child and asked, "O child, who is your father?" The child replied, "The shepherd." (After hearing this) the people said, "We shall rebuild your hermitage of gold," but he sid, "No, of nothing but mud."][1] (Bukhari#3436)

Explanation

This *Hadith* has been narrated on different occasions and Bukhari and Muslim have narrated it under different chapters in their respective Sahih.

If we keep all the narrations before us the summary would be something like this:

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said that only three new-born babies have spoken in their cradle. One of them was Sayyidina 'Isa عليه السلام who had spoken in favour of his mother Sayyidah Maryam عليه السلام. (Maryam, 19:30)

The second was the child who spoke in favour of Jurayj Al-Abid. Jurayj was an ascetic of the Bani Isra'il. He has constructed an hermitage outside the town. (Hermitage was an exclusive place in the earlier times set aside for worship. It was built on a raised ground and its upper portion was narrower than the lower portion.)

Jurayj Al-Abid secluded himself in this hermitage and was occupied in worship all the time. One day, his mother visited him and found him engaged in *Salat*. The Prophet ﷺ described practically the condition of his mother. He said that she covered her eyes with her hands (as people do on ascending some place because of sunlight). She raised her head and saw that he was offering *Salat*.

She identified herself. "Jurayj. I am your mother. Speak to me!" Jurayj considered the situation. He was occupied in *Salat* (and was perhaps lost in it with delight and repute). "O Allah! Here is my mother and here I am engaged in *Salat* (what shall I choose?)" In the end, he chose *Salat* and his mother turned away back home from there.

She came back again the next day. (He was offering *Salat*, as usual.) She said, "Jurayj, I am your mother. Speak to me!" Again, he thought, "O Allah! It is between my mother and *Salat* (what shall I do?)" and continued to pray. His mother returned as before.

She came again on the third day and Jurayj was praying. She called out, "O Jurayj!" He said to himself, "O Allah! On the one hand, it is my mother and on the other it is *Salat*, what shall I do?" And, he chose to go on with *Salat*.

The mother who had been unsuccessful in her efforts to meet and speak to her son was very disappointed and angry. She prayed against Jurayj, saying, "O Allah! This Jurayj, here, is my son and I wish to speak to him but he has refused to talk to me by his behaviour. O Allah! Do not let him die until he sees the faces of immoral, indecent women."

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said that (his mother had prayed against him that he may see the faces of those women) if she had cursed him to be involved in their mischief, he would have fallen to their ploys. (A mother's curse is an arrow right on the target).

The mother's supplication against her son took shape in this way. The Bani Isra'il talked of Jurayj and spoke highly of him. They praised his devotion and acts of worship. An indecent, sinful woman lived among them. She was very beautiful and seduced men through her charms and beauty. She challenged the people that the Jurayj they spoke of as very pious could easily fall into her trap if they agreed to that.

So, she went to him. She stood before him and offered herself to him but he did not raise his eyes towards her and simply did not pay any attention to her. She was very hurt. There was a shepherd who lived near the hermitage of Jurayj. He tended sheep and goats.

The woman left Jurayj and went to the shepherd and she let him sleep with her. She became pregnant with his child. When the child

was born she decided to take her revenge on Jurayj and she told everyone that the child belonged to Jurayj who lived in the hermitage.

When they heard this, the people were infuriated and rushed to the hermitage. They called Jurayj but he was offering his *Salat* and did not talk to them. They began to pull down the hermitage and compelled him to come down. They beat him severely and he asked them, "What is wrong?" They told him that he had had illicit relations with a prostitute and asked him to find out from the woman what she had to say. He appealed to them to give him some time to offer *Salat*. So he offered *Salat* and came to them while they had brought the child who they said was his.

Jurayj looked at the child and with a slight smile stroked his head. Then patting his stomach slightly with his finger, he asked the child, "Child! Who is your father?" The child answered, "My father is the shepherd" and he identified him as the one who grazed the sheep.

When they heard the new-born boy speak in this fashion and absolve Jurayj of the accusation, they repented having punished him unnecessarily. This is what foolish people do. It is masshysteria. They do not investigate but they accept whatever they hear. This is ignorance and foolishness.

In short, the people realised that they had been unjust to Jurayj and now they took hold of him, kissed him and embraced him. They offered to rebuild his hermitage with gold and silver but he said, "That is not necessary. Just return it to its former condition remaking it with mud." Thus, it was rebuilt as it had been.

Lessons and Messages

An intelligent person can find innumerable teachings in this story.

1. The basic lesson this story imparts is that a mother must be respected and her rights must be given to her. Even a slight sign of disappointment from her can drive man to unbelievable trouble. We have seen that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "If she had prayed that he should succumb to the treachery of women then he would have fallen to their seduction." This tells us how serious it is to

disobey a mother.

A mother is the only being whom the Lord of the universe has placed on an exclusive level so that a worshipper may suspend his worship for her. We are commanded to suspend our *Salat* if our mother calls us without knowing that we are engaged in *Salat*, and we must pay attention to her. We must repeat our *Salat* later on. Some of the Ulama hold that this command applies to *Salat* that are not *fard* obligatory which may be suspended only if there is a serious situation.

2. If anyone disobeys his mother then a man becomes subject to worry and difficulty in spite of his devotion and worship and piety. Disobedience to a mother is the cause of much anxiety for anyone.

3. The *Hadith* also discloses that Allah absolves His pious slaves of accusation and blame. It happened in the case of Jurayj Al-Abid that Allah demonstrated His Powers and gave speech to the new-born child so that his words acquitted Jurayj of the false accusation against him.

4. The guile of women is very difficult to resist and it is not possible to keep safe from it without the help of Allah. The Prophet of Allah ﷺ has called women the rope of the devil with which he enshares men. The Prophet ﷺ has sought refuge with Allah from the trial at the hands of women as he has sought refuge from other trials. Fairly learned and pious people get involved in trial at the hands of women.

5. If anyone is subject to anxiety and hardship and endures them patiently turning to Allah and beseeching Him to remove his problem then the anxiety and hardship become easy for him and he is blessed with goodness. It happened with Jurayj too that he turned to Allah when he faced anxiety and showed patience. Then Allah turned his difficulty into a means of raising his rank and he received respect and honour.

6. The *Hadith* is evidence that the people who are close to Allah, his saints, do perform extra-ordinary deeds. While it is true that the *awliya* (the friends of Allah) do perform unusual deeds yet it is not necessary that they always do that, neither is a condition of their recognition. Some people suppose wrongly that the *awliya* are bound to do unusual and extra-ordinary deeds called *Karamah*.

7. The best way to turn to Allah and seek His help when one is worried and faced with trying circumstances is to engage in *as-salah* (prayer). This is the practice of the Prophets عليهم السلام and the men of Allah. Jurayj Al-Aabid, when he faced the accusation, first performed ablution and offered *Salat*. The Qur'an also commands us to do that.

إِسْتَعِيْنُوْا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلٰوةِ

{Seek help in perseverance and prayer.} (Al-Baqarah, 2: 153)

The Believers must observe this behaviour. These days people depend on material means when they encounter anxiety and difficulty and do not resort to *Salat* and religious discipline. Undoubtedly, the means and agencies must be utilised and Allah has commanded us to do that but we must not rely and place trust on them. Our hopes must always be on Allah and we must observe *Salat* and do good deeds whose blessings attract the mercy of Allah and His favours.

8. The sinful and irreligious people are always after eliminating the religious and righteous men and they try to torment and disgrace them. On their part, the pious people must not worry about that but they must turn to Allah for He alone is the One to defeat the schemes of the immoral people.

9. We must not accuse anyone falsely and without verifying the facts. It is a most grave sin to accuse anyone and it is one of those few crimes on which Allah has prescribed the *hadd* (punishments whose limits are defined in the Qur'an or *Ahadith*). These are crimes against which a ruler or judge cannot determine punishment according to his conclusions but is bound by what Allah has prescribed. Hence, the punishment for false accusation is eighty stripes. It is known as *hadd al-qazf* (punishment for slander) and Allah also punishes the false accusers both in this world and in the next and He also proves the innocence of the accused through an uncommon and extra-ordinary demonstration. We have seen that in the foregoing narrative. Also a verse of the Qur'an was revealed for Sayyidah Ayshah رضی اللہ عنہا when she was accused falsely.

10. It is a worst kind of sin to entertain doubts about men of Allah. Anyone who hears it must not become suspicious of a man of Allah without verifying the facts, for it is the main weapon of the devil whereby he creates bad impression about men of Allah.

The Thirty-eighth Story

Aasiyah, the Queen of Egypt

First Words

The pages of history are replete with accounts of unbelievable hardships faced by righteous men. Not only men but women too have endured untold hardship and shown extraordinary patience which has baffled men. The wife of Fir'awn, Aasiyah, was one of those strong-willed women. She displayed extra-ordinary self control for the sake of Allah and quietly bore the persecution of her husband for the sake of her faith. She was perseverant and grateful to Allah. We will read in the following account how Allah helped her.

روى أبويعلى في مسنده عن أبي هريرة قال: إنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ أَوْتَدَ لِامرأَتِهِ أَرْبَعَةَ أَوْتَادٍ فِي يَدَيْهَا وَرِجْلَيْهَا، فَكَانَ إِذَا تفرَّقُوْا عَنْهَـا ظَلَّلَتْهَـا الْمَلائِكَةُ، فَقَالَتْ: رَبِّ ابْنِ لِيْ عَنْدَكَ بَيْتًـا فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَنَجِّنِيْ مِنْ فِرْعَوْنَ وَعَمَلِهِ وَنَجِّنِيْ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ (التحريم: ١١). فَكَشَفَ لَهَا عَنْ بَيْتِهَا فِي الْجَنَّةِ.

Translation

[It is related by Sayyidina Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه that Fir'awn (the Pharaoh) had tied his wife Aasiyah in four fetters, two each in her hands and feet. When the guards of Fir'awn went away, the angels would provide her with shade and she would exclaim:

رب ابن لى عندك بيتا فى الجنة ونجنى من فرعون وعمله ونجنى من القوم الظٰلمين٥

"My Lord, build for me a house in the Garden, in Your Presence, and deliver me from Fir'awn and his doings and

deliver me from the evildoing people." (At-Tahrim, 66: 11)
So, Allah disclosed her house in Paradise to her.]
(Abu Ya'la, As-Suyuti, Hayshami.)

Explanation

Those people who disobey the commands of Allah, rebel against him and do not fear His punishment are chastised and disgraced in this world within their own spheres. For instance, when Fir'awn persisted in rebellion and disobedience and claimed divinity for himself saying انا ربكم الأعلى "I am your lord, the high!", Allah caused him to be disgraced frequently before subjecting him to a perpetual punishment. Allah made him a lesson for everyone until the end of the world. In spite of his authority and power, and majesty and a large army, he saw defeat and disgrace at every step.

He faced the birth of a child among the Bani Isra'il who was destined to destroy him and he killed thousands of male new-borns. However, that child grew up in his own house at his expenses while he was unaware of the doings of Allah. He thus became the means of the upbringing of his 'rank enemy'.

His own subordinates rejected his claim to divinity. Thus, Allah blessed the maid servant who was responsible for the make-up of his daughter with faith and belief. His own wife refused to recognise him as divine and became a believer in Allah, the One, Who has no partner. The foregoing *Hadith* describes the faith of this very woman and the rank accorded to her for her steadfast behaviour against persecution.

Of the few pious women whose high rank Allah has mentioned in the Qur'an, Aasiyah, the wife of Fir'awn is one. Allah not only blessed her with a high rank but He also presented her example to Believers. He said:

وَضَرَبَ اللّٰهُ مَثَلًا لِّلَّذِيْنَ آمَنُوْا امْرَأَةَ فِرْعَوْنَ إِذْ قَالَتْ رَبِّ ابْنِ لِيْ عِنْدَكَ بَيْتاً
فِي الْجَنَّةِ وَنَجِّنِيْ مِنْ فِرْعَوْنَ وَعَمَلِهٖ وَنَجِّنِيْ مِنَ الْقَوْمِ الظّٰالِمِيْنَ ٥

{And Allah has struck a similitude for those who believe–the wife of Fir'awn, when she said, "My Lord, build for me a house in the Garden in Your Presence, and deliver me from Fir'awn and his doings, and deliver me from the evildoing people."}
(At-Tahrim, 66: 11)

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ has said that she was perfect.

Her name was Aasiyah bint Mazahim. She was extremely truthful, a saintly woman, obedient to Allah. Her husband, on the other hand, was the greatest rebel against Allah and most disobedient. She reared Musa عليه السلام and helped him in the royal palace. Fir'awn learnt very much later that she had become a believing woman and had professed the unity of Allah. He then began to be strict with her and fettered her to four iron rings. A guard was placed over her. In her sad predicament she prayed to Allah;

> "My Lord, build me a house near You in Paradise and rescue me from Fir'awn and his doing and rescue me from the unjust people."

The owner of the royal palace, the Queen of Egypt, wife of a great ruler of his times was subjected to cruel torment and she bore with it for the sake of just one declaration of unity of Allah. The very unfortunate part of it was that she suffered the ill-treatment at the hands of her husband.

Feltered as she was, she prayed to Allah and His help was there for her. He showed her the palace in Paradise in which she was to live so that she found her difficulties very easy for her.

Finally, Fir'awn had her killed and she accepted martyrdom for the sake of Allah. رضى الله عنها وارضاها (May Allah be pleased with her and she with Him.)

This martyr in the cause of Allah was honoured by finding a place in the last Book of Allah and will be recalled till the Last Hour. Her sacrifice will continue to be cited to Believers as an example till then. رحمها الله رحمة واسعة (May Allah have mercy on her, an all-embracing mercy!)

Lessons and Messages

1. Guidance is not anyone's property which may be inherited but it is a blessing of Allah. He guides whom He wills. He may if He will turn a Prophet's wife into an unbeliever as were the wives of Prophet Nuh عليه السلام and Prophet Lut عليه السلام. He may if He will turn

[1] One, One (Allah)

the wives of unbelievers into Muslims as was Sayyidah Aasiyah wife of Fir'awn. We must always thank Allah for His blessings which He has bestowed merely on His own through His mercy.

2. When a person is sincere in his faith then its blessings make it easy for him to tolerate persecution. Then, even when he is compelled to walk on fire, calls out *"Ahad, Ahad"*.[1] Or, when he is being slaughtered he says, "I have not done my duty." It was this very sincerity that made the Royal Queen, Sayyidah Aasiyah to bear with patience and fortitude oppression and cruelty; and finally she gave away her life.

3. The unbelievers have never tolerated Belief. They have always disregarded the sanctity of blood relationship too in their intolerance of Belief. They have never ceased to persecute the weak and be unjust to the oppressed. Yet, it is by going through trials and tribulations that faith and guidance are refreshed and Islam is professed with a revived spirit. The narrative brings out this very fact.

4. Those who walk the path of Truth and endure persecution for its sake are never alone. He for Whom they go through it never leaves them alone. At every step, He grants them strength and will to endure, patience and steadfastness, and strong faith. He sends unseen help. Aasiyah too received such support when the angels provided her with shade and let her see her palace in Paradise.

5. Faith is a great power. The heart that is blessed with faith gains strength and power no matter how weak it may be. We may recall how weak a woman is and how much more weak a Queen should be–naturally weak and weakened by habits! But, when she tasted faith, she stood before every kind of injustice and cruelty with manly strength.

This is the peculiarity of faith. It is the history of faith!

The Thirty-ninth Story

Why Should I Not Believe?

First Words

Among the religious scholars of the Bani Isra'il, there was one scholar whom the misled people of his tribe compelled to believe in their own composition instead of the celestial Book. In order to save his life, he used a pretext which is termed *tawriyah* in *Shari'ah*. It may be translated *double-entendre* or *double meaning*. It is to say something which may be interpreted in two ways. Apart from the obvious meaning there is a hidden or distant meaning in the words. The listener may understand one thing while the speaker means something else what he really abides by.

روى البيهقي في شعب الإيمان عن عبد اللّه إنَّ بَنِيْ إسْرَائِيْلَ لَمَّا طَالَ الأمَدُ، وَقَسَتْ قُلُوبُهُمْ اخْتَرَعُوْا كِتَابًا مِنْ عِنْدِ أَنْفُسِهِمْ، اسْتهوته قُلُوبُهُمْ، وَاسْتَحَلَّتْهُ أَلْسِنَتُهُمْ، وَكَانَ الحَقُّ يَحُوْلُ بَيْنَهُمْ وَبَيْنَ كَثِيْرٍ مِنْ شَهَوَاتِهِمْ، حَتَّى نَبَذُوْا كِتَابَ اللّه وَرَاءَ ظُهُوْرِهِمْ كَأَنَّهُمْ لا يَعْلَمُوْنَ.

فَقَالَ: اعْرَضُوْا هَذَا الْكِتَابِ عَلَى بَنِيْ إسْرَائِيْلَ، فَإنْ تَابَعُوْكُمْ عَلَيْهِ، فَاتْرُكُوْهُمْ، وَإنْ خَالَفُوْكُمْ فَاقْتُلُوْهُمْ. وَقَالَ: لا، بَلْ ابْعَثُوا إلى فُلان–رَجُلٍ مِّنْ عُلَمَآئِهِمْ. فَإنْ تَابَعَكُمْ فَلَنْ يَّخْتَلِفْ عَلَيْكُمْ بَعْدَهُ أَحَدٌ.

فَأَرْسَلُوْا إلَيْهِ فَدَعُوْهُ، فَأَخَذَ وَرَقَةً فَكَتَبَ فِيْهَا كِتَابَ اللّه ثُمَّ أَدْخَلَهَا فِي قَرْنٍ، ثُمَّ عَلَّقَهَا فِي عُنُقِهِ، ثُمَّ لَبِسَ عَلَيْهَا الثِّيَابَ، ثُمَّ أَتَاهُمْ، فَعَرَضُوْا عَلَيْهِ

الْكِتَابَ، فَقَالُوْا: تُوْمِنْ بِهَذَا؟ فَأَشَارَ إِلى صدْرِهِ. يَعْنِي الكِتَابَ الَّذِيْ فِي الْقَرْنِ فَقَالَ: آمَنْتُ بِهَذَا، وَمَالِي لا أُوْمِنْ بِهَذَا؟ فَخَلَّوْا سَبِيْلَهُ.

قَالَ: وَكَانَ لَهُ أَصْحَابٌ يَغْشُوْنَهُ فَلَمَّا حَضَرَتْهُ الْوَفَاتَ أَتَـوْهُ، فَلَمَّا نَزَعُوْا ثِيَابَه وَجَدُوْا الْقَرْنَ فِيْ جَوْفِهِ الْكِتَابَ، فَقَالُوْا: أَلا تَرَوْنَ إِلَى قَوْلِهِ: آمَنْتُ بِهَذَا، وَمَالِيَ لا أُوْمِنْ بِهَذَا، فَإِنَّمَا عَنِيَ بِـ(هٰذَا) هَذَا الْكِتَابَ الَّذِيْ فِيْ الْقَرْنِ. قَالَ فَاخْتَلَفَ بَنُو إِسْرَائِيْلَ عَلَى بِضْعٍ وَسَبْعِيْنَ فِرْقَةٍ، خَيْرُمِلَلِهِمْ أَصْحَابُ أَبِي الْقَرْنِ.

Translation

[Bayhaqi has transmitted the *Hadith* narrated by Abdullah رضى الله عنه.

When much time had passed over the Bani Isra'il (since the Book was revealed to them), their hearts had hardened and they composed a book on their own. It was composed according to their own whims, and they accustomed themselves to it. For, the truth always stood between them and their base desires so they put the Book of Allah behind their backs as if they did not know (it existed).

Someone among them suggested, "Put this book before all the Bani Isra'il. If they accept it then do not distrub them but if they disagree then kill them." Someone else suggested, "No! But, put it before such-and-such a scholar. If he agrees and obeys you then no one else will ever disagree with you."

So, they summoned the scholar. (Perhaps he had an inkling of why he was called). He took a piece of paper and wrote down the Book of Allah (the celestial Book) on it, and inserted that in a horn and wore it round his neck. He covered it with the clothes he wore, and came to the people. They placed their made-up book before him and asked him, "Do you believe in it?" The scholar gestured towards his chest–that is the Book inside the horn on his chest–and said, "I believe in it, and what is wrong with me that I should not believe in it?" So, they let him go.

This man had some disciples (students) and others who used to be around him. When he died, they came to him and undressed him and they found the horn suspended over his neck. The Book was intact inside it. They said to one another, "What do you think about his saying that he had said, 'I believe in *it*, and what is wrong with me that I should not believe in *it*?' So, he had meant the celestial Book which he had kept inside the horn when he used the word 'it'."

The Bani Isra'il then divided into more than seventy sects. The best of all the sects was the one of the scholar who had the horn.](Bayhaqi)

Explanation

In every generation, Allah has explained the Truth in His Book. When people move towards destructive habits, they find the Book of Allah obstructing them from satisfying their low desires. The injunctions seem a burden on them so they do not hesitate to change and amend them according to their convenience. The Bani Isra'il are a people who have always been ungrateful to Allah for His blessings on them. They have always turned away from the commands of Allah when it did not suit them to obey Him.

They went so far as to write down a new book incorporating their own ideas. This was when they had become very corrupt and the Book of Allah had been with them for a very long time and they had become hard-hearted and stubborn. They included in their new books their own commands and instructions so that their irreligious desires could be furthered. After they had prepared their book, what worried them was how could they launch it especially when a Divine Book existed already? Various suggestions were put forward. Someone said that the people must be taken into confidence and compelled to accept it. There was a suggestion to win over a well-known religious scholar and if he concurred he could convince the common man but if he disagreed then he should be put to death.

The last suggestion received general acclamation and the scholar was summoned. Perhaps he sensed why he was being called. Perhaps his deep faith and religious devotion provided him insight in such matters. So, before answering the summons, he wrote the

Holy Book of Allah on a piece of paper, enclosed it into a horn and wore the horn as a necklace, concealing it within his clothes. Then he went to those people who presented him their fraudulent book and asked him if he believed in it. The scholar pointed towards his chest and assured them that he believed in *it*. (He meant the Book of Allah which he carried on his chest.) He added that there was nothing wrong with him that he would not believe in *that* Book. Those people supposed that he believed in their book and so they let him go.

Some of his students (really, subordinates or disciples) always stayed with him. When the scholar died, the students undressed him to bathe his body and go through the final rites, they found the horn and the Book it contained. They understood then that their mentor had meant to say that he believed in the heavenly Book on his chest when he had placed his hand on it and had assured everyone that he believed in it, not the fake book invented by the people.

Abdullah رضی اللہ عنہ said that after that the Bani Isra'il were divided into seventy sects, the best of whom was the one that followed the scholar and his students.

Lessons and Messages

1. The *Hadith* makes it clear that it is a great crime to manipulate the heavenly Books and to misinterpret their commands. It was the habit of the Bani Isra'il that they made changes in heavenly Books and their meanings. Their religious scholars were also involved in this mischief.

In the present times, some westernised Muslims advocate reformation in Islamic laws which are mentioned in the Qur'an very clearly. This is like trying to give a new meaning to the teachings of the Qur'an and they have been unsuccessful in their efforts. Allah has promised that He will protect the Qur'an from manipulation and He raises the *Ulama* to stifle every kind of mischief in this regard. However, those people who call themselves Muslims yet try to change the perpetual teachings of the Qur'an should know that they are perpetrating the worst of crimes. May Allah protect all Muslims from it!

2. It is allowed to a Muslim to resort to *tawriyah* if he is trapped into committing blasphemy, or to be put to death if he does not. When there is danger to life, he may play on words or use ambiguous language so that on the face of it he seems to agree with those who subject him to duress but in reality he does not go against the truth and what he holds as such. In fact, it is advisable to resort to *tawriyah* rather than risk life. The schollar in this story did the right thing and after his death everyone learnt what he had meant really.

The Negus, the Ethiopian Emperor, was faced with a similar situation. When the Muslims had emigrated to Abysimia the first time, he had believed in the message of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He wrote it down on a piece of paper and mentioned his Islamic beliefs and wore that round his neck in a necklace.

His people rose in rebellion against him when they heard that he had embraced Islam. They asked him to clarify what his belief was and he pointed out towards his chest and siad, "I believe in this very religion", meaning the message in his necklace.

In short, not only is it allowed to use such words which may mean one of the two things and save one's life but it is also recommended to do it.

3. It is never without advantage for men to do some pious work. Piety is always beneficial to the doer. We see in this case that of the seventy sects of the Bani Isra'il the one to which the scholar belonged was the best. This was the result of the refusal of the scholar to accept the fake book. Though he kept his views secret yet his students and followers derived the benefit.

We learn, therefore, that we must not consider any act of piety too little and omit it. Sometimes, an ordinary work of piety is instrumental in giving tremendous benefits.

4. The *Hadith* tells us that the reason why the Bani Isra'il were divided into more than seventy sects was that they changed the commands of the Book of Allah to read their own meanings and they introduced their own thinking as religious dogmas. It was because of this crime that Allah divided them into small groups.

We must learn from it that the foregoing conduct is a crime and a grave sin for the *Ummah* of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ too. It is

because of the ominous effect of this conduct that the *Ummah* is divided today into sects all of whom are in a disarray. The only way to come out of it is for all the Muslims to obey sincerely the clear commands of the Qur'an and to submit themselves.

May Allah guide the Muslims to conduct themselves correctly. *Aameen*!

The Fortieth Story

The Beautician of the Daughter of Fir'awn... My Lord and Yours is Allah

First Words

Even in pitch darkness there is a ray of light somewhere. Thus, in the dark surroundings of disbelief, there is in some corner a spark of faith and belief. In the midst of frightful strong people. Sometimes a weakling manages to create panic in the hearts of disbelievers. This is a painful story of such a pious woman who willingly agreed to be plunged in a worldly fire with her infant children rather than risk punishment in the fire of the next world. This indeed is a lesson-bearing story.

روى أحمد في مسنده، عن عبد الله بن عباس رضي الله عنهما، قال:

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللّٰهِ ﷺ: لَمَّا كَانَتِ اللَّيْلَةُ الَّتِيْ أُسْرِيَ بِي فِيْهَا أَتَتْ عَلَيَّ رَائِحَةٌ طَيِّبَةٌ، فَقُلْتُ: يَا جِبْرِيْلُ، مَا هَذِهِ الرَّائِحَةُ الطَّيِّبَةُ؟ فَقَالَ: هَذِهِ رَائِحَةُ مَا شِطَةِ ابْنَةِ فِرْعَوْنَ وَأَوْلَادِهَا. قَالَ: قُلْتُ: وَمَا شَأْنُهَا؟ قَالَ: بَيْنَا هِيَ تُمَشِّطُ ابْنَةَ فِرْعَوْنَ ذَاتَ يَوْمٍ إِذْ سَقَطَتِ الْمِدْرَى مِنْ يَدَيْهَا، فَقَالَتْ: بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ، فَقَالَتْ لَهَا ابْنَةُ فِرْعَوْنَ: أَبِي؟ قَالَتْ: لَا، وَلَكِنْ رَبِّي وَرَبُّ أَبِيْكِ اللّٰهُ، قَالَتْ: أُخْبِرُهُ بِذَالِكَ؟ قَالَتْ: نَعَمْ، فَأَخْبَرَتْهُ، فَدَعَاهَا، فَقَالَ: يَا فُلَانَةُ، وَإِنَّ لَكِ رَبًّا غَيْرِي؟ قَالَتْ: نَعَمْ، رَبِّي وَرَبُّكَ اللّٰهُ، فَأَمَرَ بِبَقَرَةٍ مِنْ نُحَاسٍ، فَأُحْمِيَتْ، ثُمَّ أَمَرَ بِهَا أَنْ تُلْقَى هِيَ وَأَوْلَادُهَا فِيْهَا، قَالَتْ لَهُ: إِنَّ لِي إِلَيْكَ حَاجَةً، قَالَ: وَمَا حَاجَتُكِ؟

قَالَتْ: أُحِبُّ أَنْ تَجْمَعَ عِظَامِي وَعِظَامَ وَلَدِي فِي ثَوْبٍ وَاحِدٍ، وَتَدْفِنَنَا، قَالَ: ذَالِكَ لَكِ عَلَيْنَا مِنَ الْحَقِّ.

قَالَ: فَأَمَرَ بِأَوْلَادِهَا فَأُلْقُوْا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهَا وَاحِدًا وَاحِدًا إِلَى أَنِ انْتَهَى ذَالِكَ إِلَى صَبِيٍّ لَهَا مُرْضَعٍ، وَكَأَنَّهَا تَقَاعَسَتْ مِنْ أَجْلِهِ، قَالَ: يَا أُمَّهْ، اقْتَحِمِي فَإِنَّ عَذَابَ الدُّنْيَا أَهْوَنُ مِنْ عَذَابِ الْآخِرَةِ فَاقْتَحَمَتْ.

قَالَ: قَالَ ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ: تَكَلَّمَ أَرْبَعَةٌ صِغَارٌ: عِيْسَى ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ عليه السّلام، وَصَاحِبُ جُرَيْجٍ، وَشَاهِدُ يُوْسُفَ، وَابْنُ مَا شِطَةِ ابْنَةِ فِرْعَوْنَ.

Translation

[Sayyidina Abdullah bin Abbas رضي الله عنه has said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: When I was taken towards the heavens I got a very pleasant odour. I asked Jibril about it and he said that it was the odour of the beautician of the daughter of Fir'awn and her children. I asked him to tell me more about it and he said: One day she was engaged in the routine task of beautifying the daughter of Fir'awn when the comb fell down from her hands. While picking it up, she said, *Bismillah* (In the Name of Allah). Fir'awn's daughter asked her if she referred to her father when she called the name of Allah. She said, "No! But my and your father's Lord is only Allah!" The girl asked, "Shall I reveal what you say (to Fir'awn)?" she replied that she may tell him if she liked. So, she revealed it to her father, Fir'awn, who summoned the beautician and asked, "Do you have any other Lord besides me?" She answered, "Yes, my and your Lord is Allah."

Fir'awn had a fire kindled and a brass cow-shaped vessel was heated over it. When it was ready (very hot), he ordered that the woman and her children be plunged into it. She interjected, "I have something to say." He said, "Go on say, what is it?" She said, "After we are burnt down, our bones (mine and the children's) should be placed together in a cloth and buried in the earth." He agreed that he would do that.

Fir'awn commanded that her children should be thrown

into the fire first. So, they were cast into it one by one. While she watched that until it was the turn of the last child, the new-born baby suckling its mother's milk. This made her sob a little. The infant suddenly spoke to her, saying, "Mother! Jump into this fire! For the punishment of this world is very minor compared to that of the next." Hence, she jumped into the fire.

Ibn Abbas رضي الله عنه then said, "Four (new-born) babies had spoken. Isa bin Maryam عليه السلام, the child-who spoke in favour of Jurayj Al-Abid, the child who spoke for Yusuf عليه السلام (the story is narrated in the Qur'an in *surah Yusuf*) and the child of the beautician of Fir'awn's daughter."](Ahmad)

Explanation

The Holy Prophet ﷺ learnt of this story on the night of *mi'raj* when Jibril عليه السلام related it to him. The Prophet ﷺ had asked him about the very pleasant smell he was getting and while narrating the story Jibril عليه السلام told him that it emanated from the bodies of the beautician of the daughter of Fir'awn and her children.

The servants of a royal palace also enjoy a high rank and honour and this woman was more entitled to preferrential treatment because she was Fir'awn's daughter's beautician. She was very close to a member of the royal family and hence was exceptionally honoured. Fir'awn the claimant to divinity and murderer of thousands of children of the Bani Isra'il was her master. She was surrounded on all sides by forces of disbelief, yet Allah displays His Power by raising believers in centres of idolatory and polytheism. He created love for Islam in the heart of a royal beautician in the midst of darkness of unbelief and she concealed her religion and continued to discharge her obligations at the palace.

However, a spark of faith cannot be extinguished even if anyone tries to put it out, but it does burst out sooner or later. It is the fragrance that spreads out through the hardest of seals. The same happened with the beautician. A comb fell down from her hands as she was smoothing the hair of Fir'awn's daughter. She uttered *Bismillah* she picked it up. The princes was astonished on hearing these words and she asked, "You mean my father?" But, there was no hiding faith anymore,she was lost in it now.

"No! Allah is the One Who is my and your father's (and everyone's) Lord."

Fir'awn's daughter said that she would report the matter to her father and the believing woman challenged her to go ahead and tell him. So, she told her father that her beautician had chosen Someone else as her God. This was an unforgivable crime in Fir'awn's book, particularly if his own servant behaved in that way.

Here began the difficult trial for her, a trial where even very strong men falter. The word patience–or any synonym–does not aptly describe the woman's firm attitude. It is generally believed that a man's life is his dearest possession but this axiom is not true for a mother. A mother is that being in the universe who is next most merciful after the Creator of the universe. A mother's emotions are known not to mankind alone; it is seen among the animals too.

Here, a believer was not faced with her own life. The lives of her very dear ones, her love, her children were at stake. They too were to be thrown into the fierce fire. A mother's life is meaningless without her children and it takes terrible will-power to be responsible for their being thrown into fire. Fir'awn decided to teach a helpless woman a lesson for the crime of rejecting him as god. He got a large brass vessel the shape of a cow and kindled a fire under it. When it was venomously hot, he commanded his men to fling the woman and her children into the vessel.

The shameful act was performed under the sky, men were put to shame but inhuman beasts danced unconcernedly. They tried a helpless woman but faith is another name for *trial*. It is the peculiarity of the field of love that everyone who enters it faces a fresh trial each time. The Qur'an says about it:

الٓمٓ أَحَسِبَ النَّاسُ أَنْ يُّتْرَكُوْا أَنْ يَّقُوْلُوْا آمَنَّا وَهُمْ لَا يُفْتَنُوْنَ o
وَلَقَدْ فَتَنَّا الَّذِيْنَ مِنْ قَبْلِهِمْ فَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ صَدَقُوْا وَلَيَعْلَمَنَّ الْكَاذِبِيْنَ o

{Alif Lam Meem. Do the people think that they will be left alone because they say, "We believe", and that they will not be tried? And certainly We tried those who were before them. So Allah will certainly determine those who speak truly, and He will certainly determine the liars.} (Al-Ankaboot, 29: 1 to 3)

It is not enought to profess faith by the tongue. A believer will

have to pass through the kiln of trial. The *Hadith* confirms that the most severe test is for the Prophets عليهم السّلام, followed by the righteous then those who imitate them according to their degree of faith and immitation.

The faith of a person is tried according to his religious standing. The more religious a person the more he should be prepared to face trial. It is easy to make a claim but to get through with steadfastness is the real thing.

The person who professed Islam in the earlier centuries–that is, recited the *Kalimah* لا إله إلا الله there is no God but Allah–he sort of bought enmity with his family, relatives and tribe. Love and closeness turned into worst antagonism at one stroke. Problems and difficulties would be thrust on him from all sides and life would seem a mountain of hardship and torment.

It is these kilns of trial that mould someone into *Khaleel Allah* (Friend of Allah), *Zabeeh Allah* (One sacrified for Allah, Isma'il عليه السّلام), *Rooh Allah* or *Maseeh Allah* ('Isa عليه السّلام), and someone is made Muhammad Rasool Allah and raised to *Qabah Qawsayn*. Then it produces *As-Siddiq* (the Truthful, the one who confirms), and those who are given glad tidings of Paradise in this life. The history of belief is replete with similar dauntless, pure believers.

The trial of the beautician was very severe. It was a ditch of death where life lay latched to a slight pretext....wisdom. There was scope for that! But, the words of Truth had to be raised, the slogan of monotheism–of Unity of Allah–had to be called out distinctly, disbelief had to be vanquished, faith had to be introduced into houses of idol-worship.... The saturation into a life of belief did not allow one to back out on seeing the red hot vessel over the fierce fire but it made one forget and give up a life of peace and comfort and it had placed a helpless, lonely woman against the greatest oppressor of his times. She received courage from it to challenge him!

The begining of the trial was when she was summoned before Fir'awn and asked, "Is there any other Lord besides me?" She had a way out. It was the wisdom of the moment. Any intelligent person could have taken that way, seeing herself and her innocent children, little ones. She was alone, without support except the support of Allah. She had no one to help her in this world, except that she could

count on the help of Allah. There ws no harm in concealing her faith. But, she was destined to write history. She said, "Yes! My Lord and yours is Allah!" لاإله إلاالله (There is no god but Allah).

She severed all relationships and established One. She denied all, but confirmed One. Only He is the Lord. He Alone is the Owner, the Master, the Creater, the Sustainer. There is no God except Allah.

The second stage of trial began. "Throw her and her children into the heated, burning kiln." Her crime? The crime of believing! She throws in a word. "I have a wish." "What is it?" She said, "After we have died and roasted, our bones may be placed together in one piece of cloth and buried as one. (That we may rise up on the Day of Resurrection in these burnt bones and present our testimony of the sacrifice to the Great Lord.) Fir'awn agreed to do that.

The third stge of trial began when the little ones were picked up, one by one, and cast into the frightening kiln. She watched her dear ones burning, roasting, their flesh turning to ashes, their bones crackling. "Lord bear witness! There is no God save You!"

The most trying of the stages followed. The most delicate. The new-born, sucking milk was picked up...with his mother. Her steps faltered just a bit. Could there be a retreat? Because of the innocent new-born? That couldn't be! The baby spoke, his tongue came into motion; "Mother! Jump into the fire and burn yourself. This world's punishment is lighter than the chastisement of the next!"

The trial was over. The ordeal was passed through. The profession of faith was true. That is belief! This is what we call Unity of Allah. Belief is to show courage and be strong, remain steadfast, cease to fear and speak the truth. It is love. The love is belief and without it one cannot practice the dictates of belief.

Without love religion is imagination.

Lessons and Messages

1. The first message that the *Hadith* gives us, and it is also the basic message, is that faith is really to pass through trials. It is never perfected without trials. And a trial is always very severe and uphill. This is clear from the lives of earlies people and the Prophets عليهم السّلام.

In the present times people are not put to trial bodily and this is

a favour of Allah on the *Ummah* of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. However, they face trial in a different way. The trial of this age is through a sinful and disobedient surrounding and a believer is expected to came out of it obeying the commands of Allah and to be steadfast and determined.

The truth is that every people have been subjected to trial and will be continued to be put to trial. The kind of trial varies with time. It is essential to broaden the thinking of the believers and to perfect them.

2. In ancient times, rulers were given to persecute on religious grounds. It was very common for rulers to torment anyone to make them concur with them and submit in obedience. Innumerable people were put to death and tortured. This sort of persecution is found even in present times. Muslims are discriminated against. The unbelievers throughout the world persecute Muslims because of their faith and belief. Because they profess Islam, Muslims are given the worst kind of punishment. Bosnia, Kosova and Chechniya are clear examples.

3. The believers when they come through trials experience higher ranks and elevated stations. The *Hadith* alludes to this in passing. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said that he got the sweet odour of this woman and her children during his *mi'raj*. This is a respect the determined slaves of Allah receive by sacrificing their lives in His path.

4. It is proper not to disclose one's belief in Islam if that would mean unbearable persecution and untold problems for the Believer. However,that is not the doing of a determined, strong-willed Believer. An open confirmation of faith at such times, sends a shudder down the spine of disbelief and sparkles the ray of faith.

5. This *Hadith* tells us that, in all four babies (new-born) have spoken in their cradle. We have seen in this book the account of three of them in two different stories. One of them was Sayyidina 'Isa عليه السّلام son of Sayyidah Maryam عليها السّلام whose life account is found in *surah Maryam* in the Qur'an.

The other is the one who spoke for Jurayj Al-Abid and his speech spelled the acquital of Jurayj.

The thirds is the baby who made a supplication counter to its

mother's. (We have seen his account earlier.)

The fourth baby is the new-born of the present story.

Besides these, we also learn of two other new-born babies speaking intelligently. One of them is mentioned in *surah Yusuf* in the Qur'an and he was the infant who testified to the truth of Sayyidina Yusuf عليه السلام. The other is indicated in *surah Al-Burooj* in the Qur'an concerning the *Ashab Al-Ukhdood* (the companions of the pit). We will read about him in the following pages of this book.

Accordingly, there have been as many as six new-born babies who have spoken intelligently in the cradle. Indeed, that is a manifestation of the powers of Allah. And Allah knows best.

The Forty-first Story

Poverty is Dear to Me

First Words

This is the story of a man whom the Bani Isra'il had chosen as their king. However, he was constantly in fear of Allah and thought of the Hereafter. He could not find peace on the throne, and it was only in the remembrance of Allah that he received peace. So, he abdicated the throne and earned his livelihood through hardwork and labour.

روى أحمد عن عبد الله بن مسعود، عن النبي ﷺ، قال: إنَّ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيْلَ اسْتَخْلَفُوْا خَلِيْفَةً عَلَيْهِمْ بَعْدَ مُوْسَى عَلَيْهِ السَّلام فَقَامَ يُصَلِّي لَيْلَةً فَوْقَ بَيْت الْمقْدسِ فِي الْقَمَر، فَذَكَرَ أُمُوْرًا كَانَ صَنَعَهَا، فَتدلّى بِسَبَبٍ، فَأَصْبَحَ السَّبَب مُعَلَّقًا فِي الْمَسْجد، وقَدْ ذَهَبَ.

قال: فَانْطَلَقَ حَتَّى أَتَى قَوْمًا عَلَى شَطِّ الْبَحرْ، فَوَجَدَهُمْ يَضْرِبُون لَبِنًا، أَوْ يَصْنَعُون لِبْنًا، فَسَأَلَهُمْ: كَيْف تَأْخُذُوْنَ عَلَى هَذَا اللّبْن؟ قَالَ: فَأَخْبَرُوْهُ، فلبَّنَ مَعَهُمْ، فَكَانَ يَأْكُلُ مِنْ عَمَلِ يَدِهِ، فَإِذَا كَانَ حَيْنَ الصَّلاةِ قَامَ يُصَلِّي فَرَفَعَ ذَالِكَ الْعُمَّالُ إلى دَهْقَانِهِمْ؛ أنَّ فِيْنَا رَجُلاً يَفْعَلُ كَذَا وَكَذَا، فَأَرْسَلَ إِلَيْهِ فَأَبَى أَنْ يَأْتِيْه، ثَلاثَ مَرَّاتٍ، ثُمَّ إِنَّهُ جَآءَ يَسِيْرُ عَلَى دَابَّتِهِ.

فَلَمَّا رَآهُ فَرَّ، فَاتَّبعهُ فَسَبَقَهُ، فَقَالَ: انْظُرْنِي أُكَلِّمكَ، قَالَ: فَقَامَ حَتَّى كَلَّمَهُ، فَأَخْبرهُ خبَره، فَلَمَّا أَخْبَرَهُ أَنَّهُ كَانَ ملِكًا، وَأَنَّهُ فَرَّ مِنْ رَهْبَةِ رَبِّه، قَالَ

إني لأظُنُني لاحقٌ بكَ، قَالَ: فاتّبعهُ، فعَبَدَا اللّٰه، حَتَّى مَاتَا برُمَيْلَةِ مِصْرَ، قَالَ عَبْدُ اللّٰهِ لَوْ أنّي كُنْتُ ثَمَّ لاهْتَديتُ إلى قَبْرِهِمَا بصِفَةِ رَسُوْل اللّٰه ﷺ الَّتِي وَصَفَ لَنَا.

وَجَآءَ فِيْ رِوَايَةِ فِيْ مَسْنَدِ الإمَامِ أحْمَدَ: بَيْنَمَا رَجُلٌ فِيْمَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ كَانَ فِي مَمْلَكَتِهِ.

فَتَفَكَّرَ فَعَلِمَ أنَّ ذَالِكَ مُنْقَطِعٌ عَنْهُ، وَأنَّ مَا هُوَ فِيْهِ قَدْ شَغَلَهُ عَنْ عِبَادَةِ رَبّهِ، فَتَسَرَّبَ فَانْسَابَ ذَاتَ لَيْلَةٍ مِنْ قَصْرِهِ، فَأصْبَحَ فِي مَمْلَكَةِ غَيْرِهِ، وَأتَى سَاحِلَ الْبَحْرِ، وَكَانَ بِهِ يَضْرِبُ اللَّبِنَ بالأجْرِ فَيَأكُلُ وَيَتَصَدَّقُ بِالْفَضْلِ، فَلَمْ يَزَلْ كَذَالِكَ حَتَّى رَقِيَ أمْرُهُ إلَى مَلِكِهِمْ وَعِبَادَتُهُ وَفَضْلُهُ.

فَأرْسَلَ مَلِكُهُمْ إلَيْهِ أنْ يَّأتِيَهُ فَأبَى أنْ يَّأتِيَهُ، فَأعَادَ ثُمَّ أعَادَ إلَيْهِ فَأبَي أنْ يَّأتِيَهُ وَقَالَ: مَالَهُ وَمَالِي، قَالَ: فَرَكِبَ الْمَلِكُ، فَلَمَّا رَآهُ الرَّجُلُ وَلَّى هَارِبًا، فَلَمَّا رَأى ذَالِكَ الْمَلِكُ رَكَضَ فِي أثَرِهِ فَلَمْ يُدْرِكْهُ.

قَالَ: فَنَادَاهُ يَا عَبْدَ اللّٰهِ، إنَّهُ لَيْسَ عَلَيْكَ مِنّي بَأسٌ، فَأقَامَ حَتَّى أدْرَكَهُ، فَقَالَ لَهُ: مَنْ أنْتَ رَحِمَكَ اللّٰهُ، قَالَ: أنَا فُلانُ بْنُ فُلان صَاحِبُ مُلْكِ كَذَا وَكَذَا، تَفَكَّرْتُ فِي أمْرِي، فَعَلِمْتُ أنَّ مَا أنَا فِيْهِ مُنْقَطِعٌ، فَإنَّهُ قَدْ شَغَلَنِي عَنْ عِبَادَةِ رَبّي، فَتَرَكْتُهُ وَجِئْتُ هَاهُنَا أعْبُدُ رَبِّي عَزَّ وَجَلَّ.

فَقَالَ: مَا أنْتَ بِأحْوَجَ إلَى مَا صَنَعْتَ مِنّي، قَالَ: ثُمَّ نَزَلَ عَنْ دَابَّتِهِ فَسَيَّبَهَا، ثُمَّ تَبِعَهُ، فَكَانَا جَمِيْعًا يَعْبُدَانِ اللّٰهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ، فَدَعَوَا اللّٰهَ أنْ يُّمِيْتَهُمَا جَمِيْعًا.

قَالَ: فَمَاتَا، قَالَ: لَوْ كُنْتُ بِرُمَيْلَةِ مِصْرَ لأرَيْتُكُمْ قُبُوْرَهُمَا بِالنَّعْتِ الَّذِي نَعَتَ لَنَا رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ ﷺ.

Translation

[Sayyidina Abdullah Ibn Mas'ud رضى الله عنه has said that the

Prophet ﷺ said:

After Sayyidina Musa عليه السّلام the Bani Isra'il chose a man as their ruler. One night as the moon was shining, he stood in *Salat* on the roof of *bayt Al-Maqdis*. He remembered something he had done. Then he hung a rope down the roof to the ground and descended down by it. Leaving the rope suspended in the mosque, he went away from there.

He came to a people at a sea-shore. He found them milking cows or making bricks. He asked them how they did their work and they showed him how it was done. He stayed with them and worked as they worked.

So, he earned his living with his own hands and when it was time for *Salat*, he stood up to pray.

The labourers informed their master about him, and he called him but he refused to go to him. He summoned him three times but each time he did not go to him.

Finally, the master came to him himself on his beast.

When he saw the master, he fled from there. The master chased and overtook him, saying, "Give me some time, I wish to speak to you." So he stopped until they spoke to one another and he related to him his story. When he said to the master that he had abdicated the throne because of his fear of his Lord, the master said, "I think I will join you." So, the master accompanied him and the two occupied themselves in worshipping Allah. They died in this way at a place called Rumaylah in Egypt. (It is a coastal city.)

Sayyidina Abdullah رضى الله عنه bin Mas'ud said that if he was there he would be able to point out their graves from what the Prophet ﷺ had described to him.]

[This version is related in Musnad Ahmad thus:

Speaking of the people before you, one of them was (a king) over his country. Once, he thought over it and realised that the Kingdom and royalty would have to be relinquished some day while the duties of his office had caused him to neglect worship of his Lord. One night, he quietly slipped out of his palace and by morning reached some other Kingdom. He came to a coast and began to build bricks on wages. He lived on

that income and gave away the excess in charity. He continued in this way and soon his piety and virtue became known to the king of those people.

The king sent his messenger to fetch him but he refused to go to him. He called him a second time but he again refused to oblige, saying, "What have I to do with him?"

When he heard that, the king rode an animal and came to him. Just as this man saw the king, he ran away from there. The king, on seeing him run away, pursued him but could not overtake him. So, he called out aloud to the running man, "O slave of Allah, I have no authority over you (and I do not wish to nab you.)" He heard that and stopped until the king caught up with him. He said, "May Allah be merciful to you. Who are you?"

He answered, "I am so-and-so son of so-and-so and was king of such-and-such land. Once I pondered over my affairs and I realised that I would soon lose all that I had of kingdom and authority, yet I had neglected worship because of those things. So, I abdicated and came here and worship my Lord, the Majestic, the Glorious."

The king said, "You couldn't have done more for me." Saying that, he alighted from his animal, unreined it and joined the other man. So, both of them devoted themselves to worship of Allah and prayed to Him to cause them to die simultaneously.

Ibn Mas'ud رضى الله عنه said that both of them died at one time. "If I was at Rumaylah in Egypt, I would show you their graves on the basis of the description of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, which he had told us."] (Bazzar, Ahmad, Mu'ajjam Kabir, Mu'ajjam Saghir, Majma' Zawa'id.)

Explanation

Of the affairs of the world that cause men to neglect Allah and His injunctions, the most effective is authority and love for power and rule. It is more dangerous and harmful than the love for wealth and possession. To achieve authority and rule, man squanders his wealth carelessly. Authority and rule, howsoever ordinary, put into

man's head that he is superior to other people and so can dictate to them. He considers them inferior to him and comes to regard them as his subjects and dependant on him.

Sometime after Sayyidina Musa عليه السلام, someone became the ruler over the Bani Isra'il. The *Hadith* does not mention his name. During his reign, he got a thought one day that the duties of governance had caused him to neglect his obligations to Allah although he will have to surrender one day his authority and kingdom, his glory and majesty. (He may die or be thrown out.) He thought that he was not doing the right thing.

Kingdom and authority were not such things for which one may surrender one's duties and obligations to Allah. Rather, remembrance of Allah was something for which one may relinquish kingdom and authority over one's country and people.

Undoubtedly, if Kings, rulers, administrators, men in authority and leaders think in this manner then oppression and cruelty will cease and justice will prevail. If every such person thinks along these lines then he will refrain from doing anything that will cause him to regret later on.

So, the king began to think as we have narrated above. He was so overcome with that thought—process that one night while he was offering his *Salat*, he could not resist any more and quietly slipped out and went away to another country. There he joined some labourers and took up manual labour for his livelihood after learning the work from those men. It was his practice to set aside what he needed for his expenses and give away in charity all the balance.

The second thing that he did was that as soon as it was time for prayer, he suspended his work and stood up to pray.

These characteristics surprised the other people. They understood that man works hard and earns to save and does not give away savings from his hard-earned money in this way. They did not see that he had abandoned his authoritative position and wealth and he did not attach much value to wealth.

His second characteristic too was different from what people normally did. People generally devote only their spare time to worship. First, they look after their worldly obligations and then sit down to worship Allah and offer *Salat*. Labourers in particular find

it difficult to suspend work and offer *Salat.*

His two exclusive habits earned him the goodwill of the people and fame too. Soon the king also learnt of him and he was very eager to meet him. He sent someone to him with his message that he would like to meet him but he was unwilling to meet the king. The king sent a second message but he did not budge. When the king sent his third message, this man remarked, "What have I to do with the king?" I am a labourer while he is the sovereign. I do not need to meet him."

When the king heard it, his interest to meet him grew considerably. He thought what sort of a man would not like to meet a king even when he called him again and again? So, he decided to go and meet the man himself and rode up to him.

The man on seeing the king ran away from there. The king chased him and, when he could not catch him, called out loudly that he wished to talk to him and had no intention to arrest him. That man paused and waited for the king to come up to him. The king asked him who he was and prayed for him, "May the mercy of Allah be on you!"

He narrated his story and said how he had relinquished wealth and chosen poverty. The king was very much impressed by his story and he too relinquished his kingship, alighted from his horse and accompanied him. The two of them occupied themselves in worship of Allah and devotional discipline. The two became so much attached to one another that they prayed to Allah to let them die at one and the same time. Allah granted them their supplication and both of them died simultaneously.

Sayyidina Ibn Abbas رضی اللہ عنہ said that the Prophet ﷺ had described to them the location of their graves vividly and if he was in that town he could point the graves out.

A question does arise here. Both these men had enjoyed authority and were powerful. If they had continued in power, they could have been more helpful to the religion of Allah and improved the lot of the poor, and imposed Allah's laws on the people. They could have removed the difficulties of their subjects. That would have been better than their individual acts of worship.

The answer to the question is that surely that would have been

better but to rule over a people is a very sensitive thing. There is a great responsibility attached to it and it is not in everyone's ability to dispense justice to his subjects and rule justly.

The position and office of a sovereign or ruler is very attractive but the responsibilities are very heavy and it is not a bed of roses but it is full of thorns and difficulties. Very pious and just rulers have always feared Allah. Anyone with the Hereafter on his mind will find it very difficult to discharge this responsibility. This has been the reason why very pious people have refused to shoulder responsibilities of state and government.

There have been evidences of this statement in the lives of Imam Abu Hanifah رحمة الله عليه, Ibrahim bin Adham رحمة الله عليه and other eminent men.

Hence, anyone who does not consider himself capable of such responsibilities should keep away from taking them up. As for one who is capable, or there is a possibility of an incompetent person taking it up if the situation is available to him then one must not relinquish the office. The two men who gave up the throne were of the first kind so they acted accordingly.

Lessons and Messages

1. There are slaves of Allah who quit every kind of worldly office for the sake of worship. Such people are worth emulating.

2. Generally, the responsibilities of state and government cause one to neglect his duties to Allah and religion. Man must continue to worship Allah and fulfil his duties to religion even when he enjoys power and authority and leadership.

3. The account discloses that the earlier people also used to offer *tahajjud Salat* because the king is recorded as offering *Salat* in the night.

4. The *Hadith* discloses that even those who had not been Prophets had ruled over earlier people. The account tells us that the king had taken over his responsibilities after Sayyidina Musa عليه السلام.

5. It is not only excellent but also necessary for everyone to work hard to earn a living. The men who renounced the high offices could have given up their kingship and fixed a regular stipend for themselves to live on while they devoted all their time to worship.

They did not do that but ceded all connections with the government and worked with their hands to earn a living for themselves.

This teaches us that to devote oneself to worship does not mean that he should not work for a living, as some people believe. To become religious is not to give up the affairs of the world and cease seeking means of livelihood.

6. The *Hadith* also tells us that the king often pondered over the creation of the universe. His deep meditation made him realise that all the worldly things were transient including his kingdom, rule, and wealth.

Thus, it is the characteristic of the intelligent that they meditate and ponder over nature. The Qur'an has emphasised much that we must meditate and ponder especially over the creation of Allah and the universe. There are many signs in it for the men of understanding.

To think and ponder is a sign whereby a Believer is recognised. He is enabled thereby to probe the realities of things and he can thus prepare for the Hereafter.

7. The whole story also reveals the secret that contentment of the hearts does not lie in wealth and high office but is found in the remembrance of Allah. Whether it is the poor or the rich, the ruler or the ruled, it is equally applicable to all that if they devote themselves to remembering Allah then they will attain peace and contentment.

أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللّٰهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوْبُ ٥

{Behold, in the remembrance of Allah, hearts do find satisfaction} (Ar-Ra'd, 13:28)

One may possess many means of comfort but he cannot attain contentment without remembrance of Allah. Conversely, if he remembers Allah often even if he has no means, he will receive contentment.

The Forty-second Story

The Companions of the Fire—Trenches of Fire

First Words

The story of the Companions of the Fire is very inspiring and lesson-giving. The Qur'an refers to it in passing in *surah Al-Burooj* but the *Hadith* gives us a detailed account of the story.

روى مسلم في صحيحه عَنْ صُهَيْبٍ، أَنَّ رَسُوْلَ اللّٰه ﷺ قَالَ: كَانَ مَلِكٌ فِيْمَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ، وَكَانَ لَهُ سَاحِرٌ، فَلَمَّا كَبِرَ قَالَ لِلْمَلِكِ: إِنِّي قَدْ كَبِرْتُ، فَابْعَثْ إِلَيَّ غُلامًا أُعَلِّمْهُ السِّحْرَ، فَبَعَثَ إِلَيْهِ غُلامًا يُعَلِّمُهُ.

فَكَانَ فِي طَرِيْقِهِ إِذَا سَلَكَ رَاهِبٌ، فَقَعَدَ إِلَيْهِ، وَسَمِعَ كَلامَهُ، فَأَعْجَبَهُ، فَكَانَ إِذَا أَتَي السَّاحِرَ مَرَّ بِالرَّاهِبِ، وَقَعَدَ إِلَيْهِ، فَإِذَا أَتَي السَّاحِرَ ضَرَبَهُ، فَشَكَا ذَالِكَ إِلَى الرَّاهِبِ.

فَقَالَ: إِذَا خَشِيْتَ السَّاحِرَ فَقُلْ حَبَسَنِيْ أَهْلِي، وَإِذَا خَشِيتَ أَهْلَكَ فَقُلْ: حَبَسَنِي السَّاحِرُ.

فَبَيْنَمَا هُوَ كَذَالِكَ إِذْ أَتَي عَلَى دَآبَّةٍ عَظِيْمَةٍ قَدْ حَبَسَتِ النَّاسَ، فَقَالَ: الْيَوْمَ أَعْلَمُ السَّاحِرُ أَفْضَلُ، أَمِ الرَّاهِبُ أَفْضَلُ؟

فَأَخَذَ حَجَرًا، فَقَالَ: اللّٰهُمَّ إِنْ كَانَ أَمْرُ الرَّاهِبِ أَحَبَّ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ أَمْرِ السَّاحِرِ فَاقْتُلْ هَذِهِ الدَّابَّةَ، حَتَّى يَمْضِيَ النَّاسُ، فَرَمَاهَا فَقَتَلَهَا، وَمَضَى النَّاسُ،

فَأَتَى الرَّاهِبَ، فَأَخْبَرَهُ، فَقَالَ لَهُ الرَّاهِبُ: أَيْ بُنَيَّ أَنْتَ الْيَوْمَ أَفْضَلُ مِنِّي، قَدْ بَلَغَ مِنْ أَمْرِكَ مَا أَرَى، وَإِنَّكَ سَتُبْتَلَى، فَإِنِ ابْتُلِيتَ، فَلا تَدُلَّ عَلَيَّ.

وَكَانَ الْغُلامُ يُبْرِئُ الأَكْمَهَ وَالْأَبْرَصَ، وَيُدَاوِي النَّاسَ مِنْ سَائِرِ الأَدْوَاء فَسَمِعَ جَلِيسٌ لِلْمَلِكِ كَانَ قَدْ عَمِيَ، فَأَتَاهُ بِهَدَايَا كَثِيرَةٍ، فَقَالَ: مَا هَاهُنَا لَكَ أَجْمَعُ إِنْ أَنْتَ شَفَيْتَنِي، فَقَالَ: إِنِّي لا أَشْفِي أَحَدًا، إِنَّمَا يَشْفِي اللّٰه، فَإِنْ أَنْتَ آمَنْتَ بِاللّٰهِ، دَعَوْتُ اللّٰه فَشَفَاكَ، فَآمَنَ بِاللّٰهِ، فَشَفَاهُ اللّٰه.

فَأَتَى الْمَلِكَ، فَجَلَسَ إِلَيْهِ، كَمَا كَانَ يَجْلِسُ فَقَالَ لَهُ الْمَلِكُ: مَنْ رَدَّ عَلَيْكَ بَصَرَكَ؟

قَالَ رَبِّي، قَالَ وَلَكَ رَبٌّ غَيْرِي؟ قَالَ رَبِّي وَرَبُّكَ اللّٰه، فَأَخَذَهُ فَلَمْ يَزَلْ يُعَذِّبُهُ حَتَّى دَلَّ عَلَى الْغُلامِ، فَجِيءَ بِالْغُلامِ، فَقَالَ لَهُ الْمَلِكُ: أَيْ بُنَيَّ قَدْ بَلَغَ مِنْ سِحْرِكَ مَا تُبْرِئُ الأَكْمَهَ وَالأَبْرَصَ وَتَفْعَلُ وَتَفْعَلُ؟ فَقَالَ إِنِّي لاأَشْفِي أَحَدًا، إِنَّمَا يَشْفِي اللّٰه.

فَأَخَذَهُ فَلَمْ يَزَلْ يُعَذِّبُهُ حَتَّى دَلَّ عَلَى الرَّاهِبِ، فَجِيءَ بِالرَّاهِبِ، فَقِيلَ لَهُ ارْجِعْ عَنْ دِينِكَ، فَأَبَى، فَدَعَا بِالْمِئْشَارِ، فَوَضَعَ الْمِئْشَارَ فِي مَفْرِقِ رَأْسِهِ، فَشَقَّهُ حَتَّى وَقَعَ شِقَّاهُ، ثُمَّ جِيءَ بِجَلِيسِ الْمَلِكِ، فَقِيلَ لَهُ ارْجِعْ عَنْ دِينِكَ فَأَبَى، فَوَضَعَ الْمِئْشَارَ فِي مَفْرِقِ رَأْسِهِ فَشَقَّهُ بِهِ حَتَّى وَقَعَ شِقَّاهُ.

ثُمَّ جِيءَ بِالْغُلامِ، فَقِيلَ لَهُ ارْجِعْ عَنْ دِينِكَ فَأَبَى، فَدَفَعَهُ إِلَى نَفَرٍ مِنْ أَصْحَابِهِ، فَقَالَ: اذْهَبُوا بِهِ إِلَى جَبَلِ كَذَا وَكَذَا، فَاصْعَدُوا بِهِ الْجَبَلَ، فَإِذَا بَلَغْتُمْ ذُرْوَتَهُ، فَإِنْ رَجَعَ عَنْ دِينِهِ وَإِلا فَاطْرَحُوهُ، فَذَهَبُوا بِهِ، فَصَعِدُوا بِهِ الْجَبَلَ، فَقَالَ: اللّٰهُمَّ اكْفِنِيهِمْ بِمَا شِئْتَ، فَرَجَفَ بِهِمُ الْجَبَلُ، فَسَقَطُوا وَجَاءَ يَمْشِي إِلَى الْمَلِكِ.

فَقَالَ لَهُ الْمَلِكُ: مَا فَعَلَ أَصْحَابُكَ؟ قَالَ: كَفَانِيهِمُ اللّٰه، فَدَفَعَهُ إِلَى نَفَرٍ

مِنْ أَصْحَابِهِ، فَقَالَ: اذْهَبُوْا بِهِ، فَاحْمِلُوْهُ فِي قُرْقُوْرٍ، فَتَوَسَّطُوْا بِهِ الْبَحْرَ، فَإِن رَجَعَ عَنْ دِيْنِهِ وَإِلا فَاقْذِفُوْهُ، فَذَهَبُوْا بِهِ، فَقَالَ: اللّٰهُمَّ اكْفِنِيْهِمْ بِمَا شِئْتَ، فَانْكَفَأَتْ بِهِمُ السَّفِيْنَةُ، فَغَرِقُوْا، وَجَآءَ يَمْشِي إِلَى الْمَلِكِ.

فَقَالَ لَهُ الْمَلِكُ: مَا فَعَلَ أَصْحَابُكَ؟ قَالَ: كَفَانِيْهِمُ اللّٰه، فَقَالَ لِلْمَلِكِ: إِنَّكَ لَسْتَ بِقَاتِلِي حَتَّى تَفْعَلَ مَا آمُرُكَ بِهِ.

قَالَ: وَمَا هُوَ؟ قَالَ تَجْمَعُ النَّاسَ فِي صَعِيْدٍ وَّاحِدٍ، وَتَصْلُبُنِي عَلَى جِذْعٍ، ثُمَّ خُذْ سَهْمًا مِنْ كِنَانَتِي، ثُمَّ ضَعِ السَّهْمَ فِي كَبِدِ الْقَوْسِ، ثُمَّ قُلْ: بِاسْمِ اللّٰه رَبِّ الْغُلامِ، ثُمَّ ارْمِنِي، فَإِنَّكَ إِذَا فَعَلْتَ ذَالِكَ قَتَلْتَنِي.

فَجَمَعَ النَّاسَ فِي صَعِيْدٍ وَّاحِدٍ، وَصَلَبَهُ عَلَى جِذْعٍ، ثُمَّ أَخَذَ سَهْمًا مِنْ كِنَانَتِهِ، ثُمَّ وَضَعَ السَّهْمَ فِي كَبْدِ الْقَوْسِ، ثُمَّ قَالَ: بِاسْمِ اللّٰه رَبِّ الْغُلامِ، ثُمَّ رَمَاهُ، فَوَقَعَ السَّهْمُ فِي صُدْغِهِ، فَوَضَعَ يَدَهُ فِي صُدْغِهِ فِي مَوْضِعِ السَّهْمِ، فَمَاتَ، فَقَالَ النَّاسُ: آمَنَّا بِرَبِّ الْغُلامِ، آمَنَّا بِرَبِّ الْغُلامِ، آمَنَّا بِرَبِّ الْغُلامِ.

فَأُتِيَ الْمَلِكُ فَقِيْلَ لَهُ: أَرَأَيْتَ مَا كُنْتَ تَحْذَرُ، قَدْ وَاللّٰه نَزَلَ بِكَ حَذَرُكَ، قَدْ آمَنَ النَّاسُ، فَأَمَرَ بِالأُخْدُوْدِ فِي أَفْوَاهِ السِّكَكِ فَخُدَّتْ، وَأَضْرَمَ النِّيْرَانَ، وَقَالَ: مَنْ لَمْ يرجعْ عَنْ دِيْنِهِ، فَأَحْمُوْهُ فِيْهَا، أَوْقِيْلَ لَهُ اقْتَحِمْ، فَفَعَلُوْا حَتَّى جَاءَتِ امْرَأَةٌ، وَمَعَهَا صَبِيٌّ لَهَا، فَتَقَاعَسَتْ أَنْ تَقَعَ فِيْهَا، فَقَالَ لَهَا الْغُلامُ: يَا أُمَّهِ، اصْبِرِي فَإِنَّكِ عَلَى الْحَقِّ.

Translation

[It is transmitted in Sahih Muslim as narrated by Sayyidina Suhayb Roomi رضی اللہ عنہ that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: There lived a king before you and he had a (court) magician. As the magician grew old, he said to the king, "I have grown old, send some young boy to me so that I should teach him magic." The king sent to him a young boy so that he should train him (in magic). On his way to the magician, the boy passed by a monk and he enjoyed his conversation, so he used to sit there

and (thus) he came (late) to the magician who beat him for the delay. He complained about it to the monk who suggested to him, "If you feel afraid of the magician tell him that the members of your family had delayed you. And if you are afraid of your family tell them that the magician had detained you." It so happened that once a huge beast blocked the way of the people and this boy thought to himself, "I will see today whether the monk is superior or the magician." He picked up a stone and said, "O Allah! If the affair of the monk is dearer to You than the affair of the magician, cause death to this animal so that the people may be able to move about freely." And he flung the stone on the beast, and it killed it. The people were thus able to move about (freely). He then came to the monk and narrated to him (what had happened). The monk said, "My son, today you are superior to me. Your affair has reached a stage where I find that you would be soon put to a trial, and if you are put to a trial, do not give my clue."

The young boy began to treat the blind and the lepers and in fact he cured people from (all kinds of) illness. When a companion of the king who had gone blind, heard about him, he came to him with numerous gifts and said, "Whatever I have collected would be yours if you cure me." He said, "I do not cure anyone. He is Allah Who cures and if you affirm faith in Allah, I shall also supplicate to Allah to cure you." He affirmed his faith in Allah and He cured him. He came to the king and sat by his side as he was used to sit earlier. The king asked him, "Who restored your eyesight?" He answered, "My Lord." He asked, "Do you have a lord other than me?" The (king's) companion said, "My Lord and your Lord is Allah." So, he took hold of him and tormented him until he revealed that the boy had cured him.

The young boy was summoned by the king who said to him, "O boy! It has been conveyed to me that you have become so much proficient in your magic that you cure the blind and those suffering from leprosy and this and that." The boy said, "I do not cure anyone. He is Allah Who cures."

So, the king arrested him and tormented him until he gave

the clue of the monk. The monk was summoned and it was said to him, "You should turn back from your religion." But, he refused to do so. The ordered for a saw to be brought to him. He placed it in the middle of his head and cut it into two parts till a part dropped down. Then the companion of the king was brought and he was asked to give up his religion but he refused to do that. The saw was placed in the middle of his head and it was cut till a part fell down. The young boy was then brought and was asked to turn back from his religion but he refused to do that. So, he was handed over to a group of the king's courtiers. The king instructed them to take him to a mountain. "Make him ascend it and when you are at its peak (ask him to surrender his religion), if he refuses to do so then throw him down (from the mountain)." So they took him to the top of the mountain and he said, "O Allah, suffice me against them as You like." The moutain began to shake and they all fell down and the boy came walking back to the king. He asked him what had happened to the courtiers and he said that Allah had saved him from them. The king then handed him to some (others) of his courtiers, saying, "Take him and carry him in a small boat and when you reach the middle of the ocean (ask him to renounce his religion) if he does not renounce his religion, throw him (into the water). So they took him and he said, "O Allah suffice me against them and what they want to do." So, the boat capsized and they all drowned. He came walking back to the king who asked him where the men who had accompanied him were. He said, "Allah has saved me from them." He also said to the king, "You cannot kill me until you do as I direct you to do." So he asked, "What is that?" He said, "You should gather people in a plain and hang me by the trunk (of a tree). Then, taking an arrow from the quiver, say, "In the Name of Allah, Lord of the boy." Then shoot an arrow and if you do that then you would be able to kill me.

So the king called the people in an open plain and bound the boy to the trunk of a tree. Then he took an arrow from his quiver and placed it in the bow and then said, "In the Name of Allah, Lord of the boy." He then shot the arrow and it hit him in

the temple. The boy placed his hand upon the temple where the arrow had hit him and he died. The people said, "We affirm our faith in the Lord of this young boy, we affirm our faith in the Lord of this young boy, we affirm our faith in the Lord of this young boy."

The courtiers came to the king, and it was said to him, "Do you see that Allah has done what you aimed to avert The people have affirmed their faith in the Lord. The king ordered that ditches be dug at important junctions on the road. When they were dug, a fire was kindled in them. The people were told, "He who does not turn back from this boy's religion will be thrown in the fire, or they would be asked to jump into that." (The people courted death but did not renounce the religion till) a woman came with her child and she felt hesitant in jumping into the fire and the child said to her, "O mother, endure it for it is the Truth." (On hearing that, she jumped into it.)] (Muslim # 7148)

Explanation

This faith-inspiring *Hadith* has been narrated by many Companions رضى الله عنهم of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. This incident is an excellent example of the steadfast conduct of Believers.

In the ancient days sorcery was practiced and the sciences allied to it were very common. People believed in astrology, prediction and magic. It is still common among the Hindus, but, what is very unfortunate, the Muslims too have begun to believe in these things though Allah has declared these things as unlawful.

This incident took place in the times of a king and the monk was following the correct religion of that time while the king and his courtiers did not believe in Allah. The king claimed to be a god and compelled his subjects to accept him as such.

When Allah decides to spread guidance he employs one of the means to do that and it spreads to all the people. Thus, the young boy received faith through the monk and then attained such a high degree of awareness that he exceeded the monk in his station. He then had the help of Allah whereby he could restore sight to the blind and cure the leper and other diseases.

One of the king's blind companions heard of him and met him.

He too became a staunch believer and forsook the closeness to the king and offered his life in sacrifice. The monk also gave up his life in sacrifice. As for the boy, when the king despaired of killing him, he himself showed him how he could kill him. When the king followed his directions and he was killed for upholding the truth, all the people were suddenly blessed with faith and belief. They became such strong believers that they preferred to be burnt to death rather than give up faith. This is an example of faith the like of which no other religion can present. In fact, it is the peculiarity of faith.

Lessons and Messages

This story gives us many lessons:

1. The first lesson is that trial of a Believer is complementary to belief. Believers in every era face trying situations which call for extreme patience.

2. When Allah decides that anyone should receive guidance then He creates an ideal situation for him. When the young boy was to receive guidance, he sent him to the monk.

3. The company of men of Allah is never without advantage. It shows guidance to the seekers sooner or later. The young boy used to visit the monk for a little while and the monk's company prepared the way for all the people to be guided. Surely, this is the fruit of association with the men of Allah.

4. We also learn from this *Hadith* that there is scope for saying something that is not wholly true if lofty aims are sought thereby and disadvantage is to be avoided. This is the explanation given by Nawawi رحمه الله عليه for the advice the monk gave to the young boy, "If the magician questions you tell him that you were delayed at home but if you are asked at your home tell them that the magician delayed you." He assured the boy that in that way he will not be caused any harm.

5. The *Hadith* also confirms that the men of Allah do perform *out-of-the-ordinary* deeds. The boy was able to cure the blind and the leper. A whole group of king's men died but the boy was safe and sound. These are some of the examples.

6. The *Hadith* also teaches the religious men, particularly the teachers, that they should sound the religions call to one who comes

to them with some need or question. This is what the boy did with the king's courtier who had gone to him to receive treatment. The boy invited him to believe and he accepted the call.

The religious scholars of this era must pay attention to this advice. May be, Allah will grant guidance to many in this manner.

7. The *Hadith* also confirms that the men of Allah and the believers have given their lives for the sake of Truth. These were their great sacrifices.

8. This account highlights the peculiarity of faith that if anyone is blessed with faith then no power and no oppression can get him to relinquish it. A Believer is so lost in belief that its effects are never wiped out. It is the dye (صبغة الله) of Allah that never fades. The man on whom it is applied many expire but it is never erased. In fact, the man who truly experiences the sweetness of faith finds that all the things of the world are meaningless.

9. The *Hadith* also tells us that the One Who protects is Stronger than the one who kills. He whom Allah preserves no one may harm. If all the people in the world colloborate to harm someone, they will not succeed in even putting a scratch on him. We have seen that the king and all his machinery joined together to kill the boy but they could not succeed.

10. The young boy himself showed them how they could kill him. On the face of it, this is an amazing disclosure and is as if the boy committed suicide. In fact, however, it was not suicide but it was a means to draw all the people to belief. The young boy knew that the people would find their conscience speaking and their minds understanding when they observe the innocent death. And, it did happen in that way.

Besides, the boy was instrumental in getting the king and his courtiers to call the Name of Allah, and confirming that He was their Lord.

11. Allah has referred to this incident in the Qur'an in *surah Al-Burooj* from the words; قتل اصحاب الأخدود to the words; العزيز الحميد, the five verses from verse 4 to 8.

12. The version in Tirmizi discloses that all the people were burnt in the fire in the trenches but the young boy was buried in earth. He was taken out of his grave in the times of Sayyidina Umar

رضی اللہ عنہ. His hand was on his temple just as he had placed it when he was killed.

13. It is obligatory for the Believers to endure difficulties and hardships patiently. The monk and the king's courtier are examples. The boy and all the people are examples. It is not the character of a Believer to turn apostate or choose to flee or avoid confrontation. It is true that one must not invite trouble unnecessarily but if one is faced with a trying situation involuntarily then he must be patient and steadfast in tackling it.

This is why the Prophet ﷺ has said:

"Do not supplicate to Allah to place the enemy against you. Seek from Allah safety. But, if you ever have to fight an enemy then fight him with steadfast firmness. (And, do not seek to flee.)"

14. It is allowed to say something that is not wholly true when fighting an enemy. This is what the monk taught the young boy that he may tell his family members that the magician had delayed him and tell the magician that his family members had delayed him.

15. The *Hadith* also discloses that a student may sometimes attain a rank higher than the teacher. This does not reflect on the teacher but actually speaks highly of him. The monk had explained to the boy that he had surpassed him in rank.

16. It is not necessary to pass through a long session or period of time to gain awareness of Allah, to perfect one's faith, and to attain high ranks. Sometimes a long standing unbeliever who embraces Islam receives these things in a little time while others do not reach that level even after spending their lives in that search. The courtier and all the people of the place attained that station shortly after they had affirmed their belief. They had received a high degree of awareness of truth within moments. The result was that they were prepared to give up their lives for the sake of Allah and to earn His pleasure. This is that level of love for Allah which intellect cannot achieve.

As against this, many people spend their lives searching for higher levels and elevated stations but they cannot attain that.

The Forty-third Story

Let us not Forget our Past....

First Words

When man is faced with distress, he tires not of making long supplications to Allah. He is also turned towards Allah and humility is personified.... But, when Allah showers His belssings on him, that very innocent-looking face wears a proud look resembling Fir'awn, his neck is raised high and he turns away from Allah and His injunctions.

Man must never forget his past and his past and his reality. This is the story of one who forgot his past and behaved haughtily and of him who learnt a lesson and showed gratitude for the blessings... Do we find our reflection in this story?

روى البخارى و مسلم فِي صحيحيهما عن أبي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللّٰه عَنْه أَنَّهُ سَمِعَ رَسُوْلَ اللّٰه ﷺ يَقُوْلُ: إنَّ ثَلاثَةً فِيْ بَنِيْ إِسْرَائِيْلَ: أَبْرَص، وأَقْرَع، وأَعْمَى، بَدَا لِلّٰهِ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ أَنْ يَّبْتَلِيَهُمْ، فَبَعَثَ إِلَيْهِمْ مَلَكًا، فَأَتَى الأَبْرَصَ فَقَالَ: أَيُّ شَيْءٍ أَحَبُّ إِلَيْكَ؟ قَالَ لَوْنٌ حَسَنٌ، وَجِلْدٌ حَسَنٌ، قَدْ قَذِرَنِي النَّاسُ. قَالَ: فَمَسَحَهُ، فَذَهَبَ عَنْهُ، فَأُعْطِيَ لَوْنًا حَسَنًا وَجِلدًا حَسَنًا. فَقَالَ: أَيُّ الْمَالِ أَحَبُّ إِلَيْكَ؟ قَالَ: الإبِلُ أَوْ قَالَ الْبَقَرُ، هُوَ شَكَّ فِي ذَالِكَ: إِنَّ الأَبْرَصَ وَالأَقْرَعَ قَالَ أَحَدُهُمَا: الإبِلُ، وَقَالَ الآخَرُ الْبَقَرُ، فَأُعْطِيَ نَاقَةً عُشَرَاءَ، فَقَالَ: يُبَارَكُ لَكَ فِيْهَا.

وَأَتَى الأَقْرَعَ فَقَالَ: أَيُّ شَيْءٍ أَحَبُّ إِلَيْكَ؟ قَالَ: شَعَرٌ حَسَنٌ، وَيَذْهَبُ عَنّي هَذَا، قَدْ قَذِرَنِي النَّاسُ. قَالَ: فَمَسَحَهُ، فَذَهَبَ، وَأُعْطِيَ شَعَرًا حَسَنًا.

قَالَ: فَأَيُّ الْمَالِ أَحَبُّ إِلَيْكَ؟ قَالَ: الْبَقَرُ، قَالَ: فَأَعْطَاهُ بَقَرَةً حَامِلا، وَقَالَ: يُبَارَكُ لَكَ فِيْهَا.

وَأَتَى الأَعْمَى، فَقَالَ: أَيُّ شَيْءٍ أَحَبُّ إِلَيْكَ؟ قَالَ يَرُدُّ اللّٰه إِلَيَّ بَصَرِي، فَأُبْصِرُ بِهِ النَّاسَ، قَالَ: فَمَسَحَهُ، فَرَدَّ اللّٰه إِلَيْهِ بَصَرَهُ، قَالَ: فَأَيُّ الْمَالِ أَحَبُّ إِلَيْكَ؟ قَالَ: الْغَنَمُ، فَأَعْطَاهُ شَاةً وَالِدًا، فَأُنْتِجَ هَذَانِ، وَوَلَّدَ هَذَا، فَكَانَ لِهَذَا وَادٍ مِنْ إِبِلٍ، وَلِهَذَا وَادٍ مِنْ بَقَرٍ، وَلِهَذَا وَادٍ مِنْ غَنَمٍ.

ثُمَّ إِنَّهُ أَتَى الأَبْرَصَ فِي صُوْرَتِهِ وَهَيْئَتِهِ، فَقَالَ: رَجُلٌ مِسْكِيْنٌ، تَقَطَّعَتْ بِيَ الْحِبَالُ فِي سَفَرِهِ، فَلا بَلاغَ الْيَوْمَ إلا باللّٰه ثُمَّ بِكَ، أَسْأَلُكَ بِالَّذِي أَعْطَاكَ اللَّوْنَ الْحَسَنَ، وَالْجِلْدَ الْحَسَنَ، وَالْمَالَ بَعِيْرًا أَتَبَلَّغُ عَلَيْهِ فِي سَفَرِي فَقَالَ لَهُ: إِنَّ الْحُقُوْقَ كَثِيْرَةٌ، فَقَالَ لَهُ: كَأَنِّي أَعْرِفُكَ، أَلَمْ تَكُنْ أَبْرَصَ يَقْذَرُكَ النَّاسُ؟ فَقِيْرًا فَأَعْطَاكَ اللّٰه؟ فَقَالَ: لَقَدْ وَرِثْتُ لِكَابِرٍ عَنْ كَابِرٍ. فَقَالَ: إِنَّ كُنْتَ كَاذِبًا فَصَيَّرَكَ اللّٰه إِلَى مَا كُنتَ. وَأَتَى الْأَقْرَعَ فِيْ صُوْرَتِهٖ وَهَيْئَتِهٖ فَقَالَ لَهُ مِثْلَ مَا قَالَ لِهَذَا فَرَدَّ عَلَيْهِ مِثْلَ مَا رَدَّ عَلَيْهِ هَذَا فَقَالَ إِنْ كُنْتَ كَاذِبًا فَصَيَّرَكَ اللّٰهُ إِلٰى مَا كُنْتَ. وَأَتَى الْاَعْمَى فِيْ صُوْرَتِهٖ فَقَالَ رَجُلٌ مِّسْكِيْنٌ وَابْنُ سَبِيْلٍ وَّتَقَطَّعَتْ بِهِ الْحِبَالُ فِيْ سَفَرِهٖ فَلَا بَلَاغَ الْيَوْمَ إِلَّا بِااللّٰهِ ثُمَّ بِكَ. أَسْئَلُكَ بِالَّذِىْ رَدَّ عَلَيْكَ بَصَرَكَ شَاةً أَتَبَلَّغُ بِهَا فِيْ سَفَرِىْ. فَقَالَ: قَدْ كُنْتُ أَعْمَى فَرَّدَ اللّٰهُ بَصَرِىْ وَفَقِيْرًا فَقَدْ أَغْنَانِىْ. فَخُذْ مَا شِئْتَ فَوَ اللّٰهِ لَا أَجْهَدُكَ الْيَوْمَ بِشَىْءٍ أَخَذْتَهُ لِلّٰهِ فَقَالَ أَمْسِكْ مَالَكَ فَإِنَّمَا ابْتُلِيْتُمْ فَقَدْ رَضِىَ اللّٰهُ عَنْكَ وَسَخِطَ عَلٰى صَاحِبَيْكَ.

Translation

[Bukhari and Muslim have transmitted in their respective Sahih that Sayyidina Abu Hurayrah رضی الله عنه said that he heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say:

Allah willed to test three men of the Bani Isra'il. They were a leper, a blind man and a bald-headed man. So he sent an angel

to them. He came to the leper and asked him, "What is it that you like the most?" He answered, "A good colour and a good skin for the people have a strong aversion to me." The angel touched him and he was cured of his illness. He had a good colour and a beautiful skin. The angel asked him, "What kind of property would you like best?" He said, "Camel (or cows)," (the narrator is in doubt which of the two the leper or the bald-headed demanded camels and which cows.) So the leper was given a pregnant she-camel and the angel said to him, "May Allah bless you with it."

The angel then went to the bald-headed man and said, "What would you like most?" He said, "I would like to have good hair and to be cured of this disease for the people are repulsed from me." the angel touched him and he was cured of the disease. He had good hair on his head. The angel next asked him to what sort of property he would like most, and he wished for cows. The angel gave him a pregnant cow and said, "May Allah bless you with it!"

The angel next went to the blind man and asked him what he liked most for himself and he said, "(I would like) that Allah may restore my eyesight to me and I may (be able to) see the people." The angel touched his eyes and Allah restored his eye-sight. The angel then asked him, "What type of property would you like best (to have)?" He replied, "Sheep!" The angel gave him a pregnant ewe.

Afterwards, all the three pregnant animals gave birth to young ones. They multiplied and brought forth so much that one of them had a herd of camels filling a valley, the other a herd of cows that filled a valley and the third had his valley full of a flock of sheep.

The angel then disguised himself as a leper and went to (him who had been) the lepper and said to him, "I am a poor man who has lost every means of livelihood while on a journey. So, none but Allah will satisfy my needs, and you. In the Name of Him Who has given you the beautiful colour and skin and abundant wealth and property, I implore you to give me a camel so that I may reach my destination." The man said to him, "I

have many obligations (so I cannot give you anything)." The angel said, "I think I know you. Were you not a leper to whom people had a strong aversion? Were you not a poor man and then Allah gave you (all these things)?" He replied, "(You are mistaken.) I received all this property through inheritance from my forefathers." The angel said, "If you speak a lie then let Allah make you as you were."

Then angel disguised himself as a bald man and went to him (who was once bald). He said to him as he had spoken to the first man and he answered in the same way as the other had done. So, the angel said to him, "If you are speaking lies, may Allah make you as you were before."

Then the angel went as a blind man to him (who was blind once) and pleaded with him, "I am a poor man and a traveller. I have exhausted my means of livelihood on the journey. I have none to help me except Allah and, after Him, you. I ask you in the Name of Him Who has given you back your eyesight to give me a sheep so that with its help I may complete my journey." The man said. "No doubt, I was blind and Allah gave me back my eye-sight. I was poor and Allah made me rich; so take away anything you wish from my property. By Allah, I will not stop from taking anything of my property which you may like for Allah's sake."

The angel said, "Keep your property with you. You (the three men) have been tested and Allah is pleased with you and is angry with your two companions."](Bukhari#3464, Muslim)

Explanation

It is the trait of man that he forgets his past if it has been unfortunate, or the days had been days of poverty. When he is in distress then he behaves as if he is the most unfortunate man on earth, but when these days are over and Allah showers His blessings on him he becomes arrogant.

The story we have read reflects this attitude of man who should not forget his past and his reality. Even if he is receiving uncountable blessings; he must remember his days of poverty and distress. He must remember that the blessings are from Allah. He

must not become arrogant and haughty.

Wealth and poverty or transition from one state into another–any of these things–are all a way to test man. Sometimes he is tried with it and sometimes without it. He is given health or made weak, he is given honour or disgraced. These are all ways to try him.

All the three people whose account we have read were tried. The leper and the bald-men showed ingratitude while the blind man was grateful. The first two did not recognise the blessings of Allah while the blind man recognised it.

The signs of a true slave are to recognise the blessings of the Creator, the Owner, and to help fellow men.

Lessons and Messages

1. The basic lesson we learn from this *Hadith* is that if anyone faces difficulty and distress, he must believe that it is a trial from Allah and endure it patiently. When he is relieved from that then he must be grateful to Allah. The most suitable way to show gratitude is to remind oneself of one's predicament when one sees someone else in distress and help him out in the best possible way one can. It is wrong to forget one's own predicament and ignore anyone else's difficulty and distress.

2. Allah is most displeased with anyone who behaves miserly. The ideal way to thank Allah for His blessings is to spend one's wealth for the welfare of one who is in difficulty and to relieve him of his hard times.

3. Abundance of wealth and luxuries of the life do not mean that anyone having them is dear and near to Allah. Let no one be under a false impression that he is close to Allah because he has much wealth and property and is free from worry and difficulty. If these things were signs of nearness to Allah then certainly Fir'awn (the Pharaoh), Haman and Qarun (Korah) and others of their kind should have been most dear to Allah. Besides the Messenger of Alalh ﷺ too, would have been a rich man. Wealth and property are not signs of nearness to Allah.

4. Allah is able to cure every fatal and incurable disease. Of course, there is nothing like an incurable disease in the sight of Allah. He gives relief and sound health to whom He wishes.

5. We learn from the *Hadith* that the outward beauty, good colour and skin and hair, physical strength and worldly wealth are blessings of Allah. It is proper to wish for these things but it is also necessary to thank Allah for them. Besides, it is a grave sin to consider those who are deprived of Allah's blessings as worthless and contemptuous.

The Forty-fourth Story

A Woman Corrects a Scholar

First Words

A wise word is not anyone's personal property. If Allah Wills then He reforms great ulama (religious scholars) through women who are termed *Naqis al-Aqal wa ad-deen* (Incomplete in intellect and religion). This is the story of a scholar of Bani Isra'il whom a woman brought back on the right path.

روى مَالِك في موطئه عَنْ يَحْيَى بْنِ سَعِيْدٍ، عَنِ الْقَاسِمِ بْنِ مُحَمَّدٍ، أَنَّهُ قَالَ: هَلَكَتِ امْرَأَةٌ لِي، فَأَتَانِي مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ كَعْبٍ الْقُرَظِيُّ يُعَزِّيْنِي بِهَا، فَقَالَ: إِنَّهُ كَانَ فِي بَنِي إِسْرَائِيْلَ رَجُلٌ فَقِيْهٌ عَالِمٌ عَابِدٌ مُجْتَهِدٌ، وَكَانَتْ لَهُ امْرَأَةٌ، وَكَانَ بِهَا مُعْجَبًا، وَلَهَا مُحِبًّا. فَمَاتَتْ، فَوَجَدَ عَلَيْهَا وَجْدًا شَدِيْدًا، وَلَقِيَ عَلَيْهَا أَسَفًا، حَتَّى خَلا فِي بَيْتٍ، وَغَلَّقَ عَلَى نَفْسِهِ، وَاحْتَجَبَ مِنَ النَّاسِ، فَلَمْ يَكُنْ يَدْخُلُ عَلَيْهِ أَحَدٌ.

وَإِنَّ امْرَأَةً سَمِعَتْ بِهِ، فَجَاءَتْهُ، فَقَالَتْ: إِنَّ لِي إِلَيْهِ حَاجَةً، أَسْتَفْتِيْهِ فِيْهَا لَيْسَ يُجْزِيْنِي فِيْهَا إِلا مُشَافَهَتُهُ، فَذَهَبَ النَّاسُ وَلَزِمَتْ بَابَهُ، وَقَالَتْ: مَا لِي مِنْهُ بُدٌّ.

فَقَالَ لَهُ قَائِلٌ: إِنَّ هَاهُنَا امْرَأَةً أَرَادَتْ أَنْ تَسْتَفْتِيَكَ، وَقَالَتْ: إِنْ أَرَدْتُ إِلا مُشَافَهَتَهُ، وَقَدْ ذَهَبَ النَّاسُ، وَهِيَ لاتُفَارِقُ الْبَابَ فَقَالَ:ائْذَنُوا لَهَا، فَدَخَلَتْ عَلَيْهِ، فَقَالَتْ: إِنِّي جِئْتُكَ أَسْتَفْتِيْكَ فِي أَمْرٍ، قَالَ وَمَاهُوَ؟

قَالَتْ: إِنِّي اسْتَعَرْتُ مِنْ جَارَةٍ لِي حَلْيًا، فَكُنْتُ أَلْبَسُهُ، وَأُعِيْرُهُ زَمَانًا، ثُمَّ

إِنَّهُمْ أَرْسَلُوا إِلَيَّ فِيهِ، أَفَأُوَدِّيهِ إِلَيْهِمْ؟ فَقَالَ: نَعَمْ وَاللّٰه، فَقَالَتْ: إِنَّهُ قَدْ مَكَثَ عِنْدِي زَمَانًا، فَقَالَ: ذَالِكِ أَحَقُّ لِرَدِّكِ إِيَّاهُ إِلَيْهِمْ حِيْنَ أَعَارُوكِيْهِ زَمَانًا فَقَالَتْ: أَيْ يَرْحَمُكَ اللّٰه، أَفَتَأْسَفُ عَلَى مَا أَعَارَكَ اللّٰه، ثُمَّ أَخَذَهُ مِنْكَ، وَهُوَ أَحَقُّ بِهِ مِنْكَ، فَأَبْصَرَ مَا كَانَ فِيهِ، وَنَفَعَهُ اللّٰه بِقَوْلِهَا.

Translation

[Imam Malik has transmitted in his Muwatta that Yahya bin Sa'eed said that Qasim bin Muhammad said: My wife died and Muhammad bin Ka'b Al-Qurazi came to condole with me. He related to me that amongst the Bani Isra'il there was a pious, learned man who was an authority (in religion). He had a wife whom he loved very much. She died and he felt such a great shock that he shut himself in his house, refrained from worldly pursuits and avoided meeting anyone. No one could visit him. A woman heard of that and went to his doors and said, "I have a religious question to ask him and I shall put it to him alone and it is not possible for me but to see him." (Soon,) all those who were there went away disappointed but she was unmoved and did not go back insisting that there was no way out but to meet him.

So, someone told him that there was a woman with a question and while other people had gone away she did not leave the door. The scholar allowed her in his house. The woman went to him and said that she had a question to ask. "What is it", he enquired. She said, "I had borrowed some jewellery from a woman neighbour and wore it for a long time and it had been with me as a loan all this time. Now that woman wants it back. So, shall I return it to her?" He said, "Yes, by Allah, return it!" She pleaded, "But it has been with me for such a length of time..." He said, "That is why it makes it more imperative that you should return it for she gave it to you for such a long time at your request."

She said, "O you! The Lord be merciful to you! Why do you feel sorry for that which the Lord lent you (for a time) and then took it back from you? The Lord has a greater right than

you." The man contemplated over the matter and Allah granted him wisdom from her words.] (Malik *Hadith* # 555)

Explanation

Words of wisdom are not uttered by only the wise or the learned. Sometimes Allah causes an uneducated person to utter such wise words that very learned men benefit from that. In the foregoing narrative, a woman has been shown to speak wisely and without pretence to a learned scholar. In fact, she is shown to have used a psychological approach to convey to him the realities of life and she succeeded in bringing him out of his state of shock.

Surely, man is sometimes suppressed by such a degree of shock that he becomes unable to shoulder responsibilities. This is what happened to the scholar. Although he was a great scholar, an authority who gave juristic guidance yet he was overwhelmed by grief. No one could know more than him that one must bear patiently sorrow for that is the way to please Allah and that is true faith and Islam. Obviously, he had not done that intentionally but he was so overwhelmed by sorrow that he had lost himself in it.

Then Allah causes such a person to emerge from sorrow on hearing some simple words or on an ordinary experience. This scholar was awakened when the woman asked him for a ruling. He learnt or realised that his wife was a trust of Allah Who as its Owner had all right to take her back. Just as he realised it, he came out of his sorrow.

It was the same when the Holy Prophet ﷺ died. The Companions رضي الله عنهم were very sad and sorrowful. They were dumbfounded with sorrow and did not know what to do. Sayyidina Abu Bakr رضي الله عنه recited to them the verse of the Qur'an:

وما محمد إلا رسول...

{And Muhammad is but a Messenger} (Aal-Imran, 3: 144)

The Companions رضي الله عنهم were awakened to facts by this recital with a new spirit. Their restlessness gave way to peace and serenity.

Surely, life is a trust bestowed by Allah. Man has been given it to use it properly. He must not betray the trust. Whenever, He wishes to take back his trust, He has every right to do so and no one

can raise the slightest objection. Of course, there is bound to be sadness on the departure of someone and that is the right of love for him. But, if the sadness becomes an obstruction in discharging religious duties and other obligations then it is not praiseworthy but it is blameworthy.

Lessons and Messages

1. The first lesson we learn is that it is against *Shari'ah* to let ourselves be overwhelmed with sadness and sorrow to such an extent that we are unable to discharge our religious and other necessary duties. It is not approved by Allah. And it is a blameworthy act. This is because the sorrowful slave indicates by his behaviour that he is not pleased with Allah's pleasure. It is a grave sin to do that. His attitude also implies that he is displeased with what was decreed.

2. It is the right of those with whom we are acquainted that we condole with them. It is also a command of *Shari'ah* to condole with the bereaved and share his loss.

3. Words of comfort may be uttered when condoling. This is what Muhammad bin Ka'b Al-Qurazi did when he consoled Qasim bin Muhammad.

4. This narrative tells us that even the learned and righteous become unaware sometimes and they lose the chain of their knowledge momentarily. But, they soon regain awareness on a slight indication.

5. It is the duty of the intelligent people to politely and wisely remind a scholar if he happens to do something out of unawareness or forgetfulness. The woman very wisely reminded the scholar what he should do really.

6. This narrative proves that the woman possessed great insight and was very intelligent. She knew very well that if a religious scholar succumbs to unawareness then he can become the cause of the unawareness of the entire world–all the people. She knew that she should try to bring him out of that condition. She also knew that it was very important to bring him back to facts and that is why she did not hesitate to surrender her dignity at his threshold.

7. Wisdom and insight is found in women too. Sometimes, they

prove to be more intelligent and wise than men. This narrative is evidence of the statement.

8. Often examples and similitudes bring facts to light. This narrative emphasises that we must use examples to convey our message or argument effectively and in a better way to the listener.

The Qur'an has frequently used examples to explain its Truth. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ too often explained his teachings by giving examples. This shows that it is better and recommended to present examples in our speech and writings.

9. It is not improper to love one's wife deeply. Rather, she has a right over it. It also is a means of chastity and modesty. This is proved by the *Hadith*. Nevertheless, it is imperative that one must not allow his love for his wife to overcome his duty to Allah and His commands, and he must not ignore the injunctions of *Shari'ah* because of his love for his wife. If his love for his wife causes him to neglect the injunctions of *Shari'ah* or to perpetrate sin then such a love is disallowed and unlawful.

10. When condoling with anyone it is better to relate events that may serve as a guidance. Often people condole and express words of consolation to one who is bereaved but if he is doing something wrong his sin is overlooked on the idea that it is not proper to advice one who is afflicted. This is a wrong approach. It is as much the responsibility of one condoling to prevent anyone from committing a sin as it is to offer condolence. The scholar in the foregoing story was committing a sin by not being pleased with the pleasure of Allah and the woman politely drew his attention to it by citing an example. He benefited from that and came out of the condition of unawareness.

﴿إِنَّ فِيْ ذَالِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لِّأُولِي الْأَبْصَارِ﴾

(Surely in that is a Lesson for Those Who Have Eyes)

(Aal Imran, 3: 13)

PART FIVE

Lesson Bearing Narratives of the Wrong Doers

The Forty-fifth Story

To Take Pride in Ancestors Who Were Unbelievers

First Words

If anyone has no personal credit to his favour then he boasts on the achievements of his forefathers to claim honour for himself. If pride on forefathers is to recall blessings and their distinctive service to religion then it is not sinful. On the other hand, pride on irreligious people for their worldly achievements is a disapproved conduct and sinful, too. This is the story of two people who took pride in their ancestors and it brings to light the enormity and repulsiveness of this conduct.

روى أحمد في مسنده عَنْ أُبَيِّ ابْنِ كَعْبٍ قَالَ: انْتَسَبَ رَجُلان عَلَى عَهْدِ رَسُوْلِ اللّٰه ﷺ، فَقَالَ أَحَدُهُمَا: أَنَا فُلانُ ابْنُ فُلان، فَمَنْ أَنْتَ لا أُمَّ لَكَ؟ فَقَالَ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰه ﷺ: انْتَسَبَ رَجُلان عَلَى عَهْدِ مُوْسَى عَلَيْهِ السَّلام، فَقَالَ أَحَدُهُمَا: أَنَا فُلانُ بْنُ فُلان، حَتَّى عَدَّ تِسْعَةً، فَمَنْ أَنْتَ لا أُمَّ لَكَ؟ قَالَ: أَنَا فُلانُ ابْنُ فُلانٍ ابْنُ الإسْلام. قَالَ: فَأَوْحَى اللّٰه إِلَى مُوْسَى عَلَيْهِ السَّلام أَنَّ هَذَيْنِ الْمُنْتَسِبَيْن: أَمَّا أَنْتَ أَيُّهَا الْمُنْتَمِي أَوْ الْمُنْتَسِبُ إِلَى تِسْعَةٍ فِي النَّار، فَأَنْتَ عَاشِرُهُمْ، وَأَمَّا أَنْتَ يَا هَذَا الْمُنْتَسِبُ إِلَى اثْنَيْنِ فِي الْجَنَّةِ، فَأَنْتَ ثَالِثُهُمَا فِي الْجَنَّةِ.

Translation

[Sayyidina Ubayy bin Ka'b رضی الله عنه stated that in the times of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ two men sat down to probe their line of descent. So, one of them boasted, "I am so-and-so, son of so-and-so.... So, who are you, may you not have a mother?" (The last is a harmless Arabic phrase uttered in oral speech.)

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ (when he heard it) said, "In the times of Musa عليه السلام two men began to search each other's forefathers. One of them said, "I am so-and-so, son of so-and-so," until he had counted names of nine of his forefathers. He then asked, "Who are you, may you not have a mother?"

The second person said, "I am so-and-so, son of so-and-so, son of Islam." (That is, he gave his name, his father's name, and said that they were sons of Islam, meaning, they were Muslims.)

Allah revealed to Musa عليه السلام (of) the two genealogists, the one who counted upto nine ancestors (should know that), all the nine of them were dwellers of Hell; and he is the tenth. And, you who have counted your ancestors to two, both of them are dwellers of Paradise and you are their third in Paradise."](Ahmad)

Explanation

All men have one beginning. They are all children of Aadam عليه السلام. The difference of geographical regions, nations, tribes and language are only to distinguish them, not marks of merit or excellence. كلكم لآدم وآدم من تراب These are the beautiful words of the Holy Prophet ﷺ meaning, "You are all from Aadam and Aadam was (created) from dust." In other words, your beginings are in dust and you will return to it. Your sources of pride do not exist anymore nor will any remain afterwards. They have all been consigned to dust and all the others will be consigned to dust.

It is a wrong habit of man that he boasts about his forefathers, saying, "My father and ancestors were such and such." This repulsive habit of boasting in forefathers was deeply set in the Arabs of the Days of Ignorance and they convened meetings to discuss these things haughtily.

In fact, pride in ancestry is tantamount to consider oneself superior and more excellent than other people. It is not consonant with Islamic teachings and the principle of equality, more so if the ancestors were unbelievers. It is also very sinful. A son of a king has no merit because he is a king's son. Bereft of piety, the son of a king and the son of a sweeper are equal in the sight of Allah but if a

sweeper's son is endowed with piety then he is more excellent than a king's son in the sight of Allah. (No man is more excellent than the other. Taqwa is the standard whether he is a scholar or an illiterate.)

يَاأَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ وَّأُنْثٰى وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوْبًا وَّقَبَآئِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوْا. إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ أَتْقٰكُمْ o

{O mankind! Surely We have created you from a male and a female, and have made you into nations and tribes that you may know one another.} (Al-Hujurat, 49: 13)

The Qur'an has made it very clear that colour of the skin or descent, geographical divisions of cities or nations, brotherhood or tribes–all such divisions are ignorant distinctions promoting prejudice. They are stinking and filthy habits, and boasting on this basis leads to warfare and bloodshed.

A person is not worthy of respect because he is the son of a pious man. The son of a Prophet is not entitled to esteem because he is a Prophet's son. Every man's own deed entitles him to receive respect or to be disgraced. The son of Prophet Nuh عليه السّلام was accursed because of his deeds while the sons of Prophet Ya'qub عليه السّلام and Prophet Ibrahim عليه السّلام were honourable and noble because of their deeds.

Thus, in the narrative we see that when two people began to boast on their predecessors, the Messenger of Allah ﷺ corrected them and related to them an incident of the times of Sayyidina Musa عليه السّلام. A similar argument between two men had ensued in his times and they boasted on their line of descent.

One of them regarded himself as superior to the other who he thought was inferior to him and counted his nine ancestors proudly. He said, "May you not have a mother", and suggested that he himself was from a noble and worthy family although all of them were unbelievers. He asked the other man contemptuously, "Who are you?"

It is just like anyone boasting about himself that he is the son of Fir'awn, son of Fir'awn, son of Fir'awn, son of Fir'awn, and then asking the other, "Who are you? What is your reality? No one knows you, who is your father. Which mother bore you?"

The second person noted the insulting and derisive comments of

the first man. He said quietly to him that he was so-and-so, son of so-and-so, son of Islam. In other words, he introduced himself recalling the names of his father and grand father and adding that they were sons of Islam. He conceded that his forefathers above his grandfather were unbelievers so why should he attach the names of disbelievers with his own name. "Why should I feel proud of the unbelievers?"

It is known about Sayyidina Salman Farsi رضی الله عنه that he was with some people who mentioned their forefathers. When it was his turn to say something, he said, "As for me, I am but the son of Islam." He meant to say that his father and grandfather and those before them were all unbelievers and he had earned the blessings of Islam so why should he relate himself to them? When Sayyidina Umar رضی الله عنه learnt of it, he began to weep and said,

وأنا ابن اسلام

"And I too am the son of Islam", for his father too was an unbeliever.

The second man in the narrative too mentioned his father and grandfather but, because those before them were unbelievers, he did not mention them, saying merely that he was related to Islam.

Allah revealed to Sayyidina Musa عليه السّلام that the first man who had named nine of his forefathers knew that they were disbelievers. All of them were consigned to Hell and he ws the tenth of them to go to Hell because he had boasted on his disbelieving parents.

The second man who listened to his degrading remarks without being provoked did not boast on his ancestors. It sufficed him to mention his father and grandfather and regard himself as an adherent of Islam. So, both his father and grandfather were dwellers of Paradise, he being the third of them. He took pride in his Islamic connections and not in his ancestors.

Lessons and Messages

1. It is the worst kind of sin to take pride in one's forefathers particularly if they were unbelievers. It is synonymous with degrading Islam.

2. Islam (when it came) smashed all icons of prejudice of colour and descent, differences because of region and nationality. It has

declared unlawful prejudice of every kind whereby man is led to take pride on the basis of region and nation, and tribe and nationality.

3. It is not an act of prejudice to follow one's ancestors who were on the right path.

4. To end a disapproved or wicked act, it is better to relate a lesson-bearing event concerning it. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ had related an event of the times of Sayyidina Musa عليه السلام to two men who argued among themselves about their ancestry.

5. No one becomes despicable simply because someone else calls him so. True honour or dishonour is from Allah and He does not bestow it on the basis of descent or family ties or tribal links. He looks at anyone's piety. Anyone who measures to the standard of piety is noble, honourable and worth respect but he who falls short of it is worthless, disgraced and despised.

The Forty-sixth Story

The Daring Insolent

First Words

Sometimes a mere word that a man utters is the cause of his destruction in this life and the next. He loses his life-long effort in worship and devotion. To consider a sinner as an unworthy person not liable to gain forgiveness is in itself a crime which is unforgiveable. It is not upto the ignorant and unknowing to forgive or not to forgive anyone but it behoves only the All-Knowing and All-Aware to forgive or punish.

Let those people who are given to pass judgement on a sinner first read this article. Let them see their reflection in the mirror that the Holy Prophet ﷺ has pointed out.

١. روى مسلم في صحيحه عَنْ جُنْدَبٍ أنَّ رَسُوْلَ اللّٰهِ ﷺ حَدَّثَ أنَّ رَجُلاً قَالَ: وَاللّٰهِ لا يَغْفِرُ اللّٰه لِفُلان، وَإنَّ اللّٰه تَعَالَى قَالَ: مَنْ ذَا الَّذِى يَتَألَّى عَلَيَّ أنْ لا أغْفِرَ لِفُلانٍ، فَإِنِّي قَدْ غَفَرْتُ لِفُلانٍ، وَأحْبَطْتُ عَمَلَكَ أوْ كَمَا قَالَ.

٢. وروى أبو داود في سننه: عَنْ أبِي هُرَيْرَةَ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ رَسُوْلَ اللّٰهِ ﷺ يَقُوْلُ كَانَ رَجُلان فِي بَنِي إسْرَائِيْلَ مُتَوَاخِيَيْنِ، فَكَانَ أحَدُهُمَا يُذْنِبُ، وَالآخَرُ مُجْتَهِدٌ فِي الْعِبَادَةِ، فَكَانَ لا يَزَالُ الْمُجْتَهِدُ يَرَى الآخَرَ عَلَى الذَّنْبِ فَيَقُوْلُ: أقْصِرْ.

فَوَجَدَهُ يَوْمًا عَلَى ذَنْبٍ فَقَالَ لَهُ: أقْصِرْ. فَقَالَ خَلِّنِي وَرَبِّي أبُعِثْتَ عَلَيَّ رَقِيْبًا؟ فَقَالَ: وَاللّٰهِ لا يَغْفِرُ اللّٰه لَكَ، أوْ لا يُدْخِلُكَ اللّٰه الْجَنَّةَ.

فَقَبَضَ أَرْوَاحَهُمَا، فَاجْتَمَعَا عِنْدَ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِيْنَ، فَقَالَ لِهَذَا الْمُجْتَهِدِ: أَكُنْتَ بِي عَالِمًا، أَوْ كُنْتَ عَلَى مَا فِي يَدِي قَادِرًا؟ وَقَالَ لِلْمُذْنِبِ اذْهَبْ، فَادْخُلِ الْجَنَّةَ بِرَحْمَتِي، وَقَالَ لِلآخَرِ اذْهَبُوْا بِهِ إِلَى النَّارِ.

قَالَ أَبُو هُرَيْرَةَ وَالَّذِيْ نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ لَتَكَلَّمَ بِكَلِمَةٍ أَوْبَقَتْ دُنْيَاهُ وَآخِرَتَهُ.

Translation

[**1.** It is transmitted by Muslim that Sayyidina Jundub رضی الله عنه said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said that a man remarked, "Allah would not forgive such and such (a person)." Thereupon Allah, the Exalted and Glorious, said, "Who is he who adjures about Me that I would not pardon so-and-so. I have granted pardon to so-and-so and blotted out the deed (of him who took an oath that I would not pardon him)."]

[**2.** It is transmitted by Abu Dawood in his *sunan* that Sayyidina Abu Hurayrah رضی الله عنه reported the Messenger of Allah ﷺ as saying: There were two men of the Bani Isra'il who were very close friends. One of them was a great sinner while the other exerted himself to perform pious deeds. The man who exerted in worship continued to see the other in sin and would say, "Refrain from sin." One day on finding him in sin, he said, "Keep away from it", but he said, "Leave me alone, for God's sake. Are you sent as a watchman over me?" He said, "I swear by Allah, He will not forgive you nor will He admit you to Paradise." Then their souls were taken away and were presented before the Lord of the worlds. He said to him who had striven hard in worship, "Did you have knowledge about Me or did you have power over that which I had in My hand?" He said to the sinner, "Go, and enter Paradise by My Mercy." And for the other, He said, "Take him to Hell."

Abu Hurayrah رضی الله عنه said, "By Him in Whose Hand is my soul, he spoke a word which destroyed him in this world and the next."] (Muslim *Hadith* # 6350 and Abu Dawood *Hadith* # 4883).

Explanation

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ has related the incident and pointed

out the very dangerous weakness and its repercussions. People often pre-suppose about a sinner that he will not be forgiven, or they continue to rebuke him that he will not be forgiven and he is a sinner. They regard him as inferior and lowly.

Of course, to despise sin is a sign of faith but it does not mean that the sinner too must be despised. Allah may guide a sinner to the Right Path any time, and may take away from a righteous person the inclination to practice piety at any moment. It may also be that one who is known as a sinner may have performed a deed–or may be used to performing it–which might earn him forgiveness and Paradise.

To consider anyone not worthy of forgiveness and inferior because of his sins is a very dangerous weakness which might devour one's life-long piety and righteousness.

It must be known that it is the duty of every Muslim to prevent anyone from doing wicked deeds. To command the approved and to forbid the disapproved is an obligation on all Muslims but the wrong-doer must not be made to feel despised.

The narrative tells us that the pious man did indeed fulfil his duty to stop his friend from doing evil. However, because he was bereft of a proper understanding of Islam, he lost his temper after constant preaching and made a firm declaration on oath.

"By Allah, He will not forgive you, or you will not go to Paradise."

This was a very dangerous statement. It smacked of disgrace for the sinning friend and disgraced him. He also made him despair of Allah's Mercy. It also made the speaker appear to hinder in the work of Allah apropriating His authority; as if he was the one who awarded Paradise or Hell.

Allah punished him for that by bringing to naught all his life-long pious achievements and let him know that he whom he considered worthless was sent to Paradise.

The same weakness is found in people these days. This is the devil's prompting. The devil generally prompts those people to act in this maner who have put in their first steps in piety. Such new entrants to piety often consider other people as sinful while they regard themselves as on the right path. They accuse anyone who

does anything against the *sunnah* as irreligious and not rightous. This weakness may land one in Hell.

May Allah preserve all Muslims from this weakness and cause them to respect fellow Muslims. *Aameen!*

Lessons and Messages

1. It is a grave sin to despise a sinner, to think of him as disgraceful and unworthy of forgiveness and to debase him. We must despise the sin, not the sinner.

2. It is very insolent to swear on Allah that He would certainly do or not do something. It is like interfering in the Authority of Allah and His work. The punishment is very severe for that.

Nevertheless, there are some slaves of Allah who have attained a high station so they take pride in Allah who respects their nearness to Him and gives what they ask for. Thus, they swear on Him that He would do such-and-such thing and, in fact, He does that obliging them. There are quite a few examples of that in books of *Ahadith*. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ has said, "There are certain slaves of Allah who when they swear on Him, He fulfils what they claim He would do."

3. It is very wrong and sinful to declare about anyone that he would go to Paradise or to Hell on the basis of his righteous deeds and wicked living. Only Allah knows who will go to Paradise and who to Hell. Hence, we find in a *Hadith* that sometimes a person performs deeds that take one to Paradise when he suddenly does something that makes him worthy of going to Hell. As against this, someone continues to do deeds that would take him to Hell when suddenly he does a pious deed that entitles him to go to Paradise.

Thus, while it is right for us to say that such-and-such a person performs deeds that are worthy of Paradise or does something that may land anyone in Hell but it is a grave sin to decide whether anyone is going to Paradise or to Hell, and it is a careless mistake.

4. We must fear much a wicked death. No one can say how he will die. In this case too someone who was pious all his life, having many righteous deeds against his name, suddenly uttered a phrase that made him liable to go to Hell. We must make many supplications to Allah for an ending of life on faith and virtue. We

must continue to fear Allah and seek safety.

5. The *Hadith* is evidence for the contention of the *Ahl-As-Sunnah* (observers of the practice of the Prophet ﷺ) that Allah may, if He chooses, forgive a sinner even if he has not repented. The stubborn sinner in the foregoing narrative earned forgiveness without having repented.

The Forty-seventh Story

The Cruelty of a Hard–hearted Woman

First Words

Mercy, benevolence and compassion are the attributes of the Ar-Rahman and Ar-Rahim (the Most Merciful Allah). When they are found in a slave; he is nearer to Allah. In contrast, hard-heartedness, brutality and cruelty are qualities of the devil and these qualities tend to take their owner towards Hell. This is the case of a mute cat being tortured by a cruel woman who was then consigned to Hell as its fuel.

١. روى البخارى عَنِ ابْنِ عُمَرَ رَضِيَ اللّٰهُ عَنْهُمَا عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ: دَخَلَتِ امْرَأَةٌ النَّارَ فِيْ هِرَّةٍ رَبَطَتْهَا فَلَمْ تُطْعِمْهَا وَلَمْ تَدَعْهَا تَأْكُلُ مِنْ خَشَاشِ الأَرْضَ.

٢. وفي رواية عند البخارى: عُذِّبَتِ امْرَأَةٌ فِي هِرَّةٍ سَجَنَتْهَا حَتَّى مَاتَتْ، فَدَخَلَتْ فِيْهَا النَّارَ، لا هِيَ أَطْعَمَتْهَا، وَلا سَقَتْهَا إِذْ حَبَسَتْهَا، وَلا هِيَ تَرَكَتْهَا تَأْكُلُ مِنْ خَشَاشِ الأَرْضِ.

٣. وقد رأى الرسول ﷺ هذه المرأةالتى ربطت الهرة في النار عندما رأى الجنة والنار في صلاة الكسوف، ففي صحيح البخارى عن أسماء بنت أبي بكر أن الرسول ﷺ قال: وَدَنَتْ مِنِّي النَّارُ حَتَّى قُلْتُ: أَيْ رَبِّ وَأَنَا مَعَهُمْ؟ فَإِذَا امْرَأَةٌ. حَسِبْتُ أَنَّهُ قَالَ: تَخْدِشُهَا هِرَّةٌ، قُلْتُ: مَا شَأْنُ

هَذِهِ؟ قَالُوْا: حَبَسَتْهَا حَتَّى مَاتَتْ جُوْعًا، لا أَطْعَمَتْهَا، وَلا أَرْسَلَتْهَا تَأْكُلُ. قَالَ نَافِعٌ حَسِبْتُ أَنَّهُ قَالَ: مِنْ خَشِيْشِ أَوْ خَشَاشِ الأَرْضِ.

Translation

[1. Sayyidina Abdullah bin Umar رضى الله عنهما has said that the Prophet ﷺ said: A woman entered the Fire because of a cat which she had tied; she neither gave it food nor set it free to eat from the vermin of the earth]

[2. (Another version in Bukhari): The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: A woman was tortured and was put in Fire because of a cat she had kept locked till she died of hunger.]

[3. The Messenger of Allah ﷺ saw her being punished in Hell when he was shown Paradise and Hell while he was offering the *Salat* of eclipse of the sun. (So it is narrated by Asma bint Abu Bakr رضى الله عنهما and transmitted by Bukhari.) She said that Messenger of Allah ﷺ said about the fire of Hell intensifying while he was offering the *Salat* of the eclipse of the sun: ...And Hell became so near to me that I said, "O my Lord, will I be among those people?" (that in spite of being there, they are being punished). Then suddenly I saw a woman; and a cat was lacerating her with its claws. On my enquiry, they told me that the woman had imprisoned the cat till it died of starvation, and she neither fed it nor freed it so that it might feed itself from the insects, vermin and creatures of earth.]

[According to one version, the woman was from the Bani Isra'il.] (Bukhari *Hadith* # 3318, 2365, 3482 and Muslim *Hadith* # 6345)

Explanation

It was the limit of cruelty that a mute animal was locked away to die of hunger. The most cruel and hard-hearted person cannot be expected to do it. Islam teaches us that we must show mercy not only to human beings but also to animals.

Her cruelty to the mute animal took her to Hell. The *Hadith* tells us that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was offering the *Salah al-Kusuf* (*Salat* of solar eclipse) when he was shown Paradise and Hell and observed her being punished. He saw that a cat was tearing her with her claws and she (the woman) was also burning in the Fire of Hell.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ had seen Paradise and Hell in the *Salat* of the eclipse and the *Hadith* tells us that his recital in the *Salat* was lengthy and his bowing and prostrations too were prolonged. During the *Salat* he sometimes moved forward and sometimes went back while we are commanded to stay stationary in *Salat*. The Companions رضي الله عنهم were naturally surprised so they asked him why he did that.

He explained to them that Allah showed him Paradise and Hell during the *Salat*. "When Paradise was before me I would move forward with a great desire but when Hell was shown I moved back in surprise. When the flames of Fire rose forward, I exclaimed, "My Lord! While I am there and they are punished?" The truth is that in the presence of a Prophet, no one is punished.

While observing Paradise and Hell, he saw a woman burning in the Fire and a cat was clawing at her. The Prophet ﷺ asked about it and the angels told him, "She is being punished because of that very cat. She had kept the cat under lock and neither did she feed her herself nor let her out that she might find her own food. The cat died of hunger and thirst. Her cruelty to the animal became the cause of her being punished."

Lessons and Messages

1. To show mercy to human beings is an obligatory character. To show mercy to the animals is also an obligatory act. But, to let an animal die of hunger and thirst is the worst kind of cruelty.

2. The *Hadith* is also an evidence that if mute animals and birds are caged then those who keep them must be very particular about feeding and watering them and about their other needs. It is not proper to cause hardship to the creatures of Allah.

3. This case tells us that just as a small good deed may fetch the perpetrator Paradise, so too a minor evil deed may get punishment to the doer, and he may go to Hell.

4. The *Hadith* tells us that if the cat was left to itself, it would have eaten insects and vermin. This shows that the insects and vermin, etc. are not created without purpose. Sometimes, man does worry himself why these things have been created. (May Allah protect us from wrong thinking!) of the other reasons for its creation,

one is that they are food for other animals.

5. We have also learnt that Allah punishes man in Hell in keeping with his evil deed. This woman was punished through the cat. The cat injured her with her claws. So, the punishment of the Hereafter will be in relation to the deed in the world.

[1] Al-Qasama is the oath about accusation of killing someone.

The Forty-eighth Story

All For a Rope

First Words

Some people do not hesitate to take away someone's life and they do it over petty matters. Such a fire of anger burns within them that it engulfs within it such qualities as fear of Allah, thought of the Hereafter, humane behaviour, compassion, etc. This is the story of a man who took away a man's life for the sake of a rope.

Of the several evils common in the days of Ignorance was the rampant killing and blood-shedding. This story tells of the fate of those who do not value human life and speak lies to wash away their crime.

روى البخارى في صحيحه: عَنْ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ رَضِيَ اللّٰه عَنْهُمَا قَالَ: إنَّ أَوَّلَ قَسَامَةٍ كَانَتْ فِي الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ لَفِينَا بَنِي هَاشِمٍ، كَانَ رَجُلٌ مِنْ بَنِي هَاشِمٍ اسْتَأْجَرَهُ رَجُلٌ مِنْ قُرَيْشٍ مِنْ فَخِذٍ أُخْرَى، فَانْطَلَقَ مَعَهُ فِي إِبِلِهِ، فَمَرَّ رَجُلٌ بِهِ مِنْ بَنِي هَاشِمٍ قَدِ انْقَطَعَتْ عُرْوَةُ جُوَالِقِهِ، فَقَالَ: أَغِثْنِي بِعِقَالٍ أَشُدُّ بِهِ عُرْوَةَ جُوَالِقِي، لا تَنْفِرُ الإبِلُ، فَأَعْطَاهُ عِقَالاً فَشَدَّ بِهِ عُرْوَةَ جُوَالِقِهِ، فَلَمَّا نَزَلُوْا عُقِلَتِ الإِبِلُ إِلا بَعِيرًا وَاحِدًا.

فَقَالَ الَّذِيْ اسْتَأْجَرَهُ: مَاشَأْنُ هَذَ الْبَعِيْرِ لَمْ يُعْقَلْ مِنْ بَيْنِ الإبلِ؟ قَالَ: لَيْسَ لَهُ عِقَالٌ، قَالَ: فَأَيْنَ عِقَالُهُ؟ قَالَ: فَحَذَفَهُ بِعَصًا كَانَ فِيْهَا أَجَلُهُ، فَمَرَّ بِهِ رَجُلٌ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْيَمَنِ، فَقَالَ: أَتَشْهَدُ الْمَوْسِمَ؟ قَالَ: مَا أَشْهَدُ، وَرُبَّمَا شَهِدْتُهُ. قَالَ: هَلْ أَنْتَ مُبْلِغٌ عَنِّي رِسَالَةً مَرَّةً مِنَ الدَّهْرِ؟ قَالَ: نَعَمْ، قَالَ: فَكَتَبَ: إِذَا

أَنْتَ شَهِدْتَ الْمَوْسِمَ فَنَادِ يَا آلَ قُرَيْشٍ، فَإِذَا أَجَابُوْكَ، فَنَادِيَا آلَ بَنِي هَاشِمٍ، فَإِنَّ أَجَابُوْكَ فَسَلْ عَنْ أَبِي طَالِبٍ، فَأَخْبِرْهُ أَنَّ فُلانًا قَتَلَنِي فِي عِقَالٍ.

وَمَاتَ الْمُسْتَأْجَرُ، فَلَمَّا قَدِمَ الَّذِي اسْتَأْجَرَهُ أَتَاهُ أَبُوْ طَالِبٍ، فَقَالَ: مَا فَعَلَ صَاحِبُنَا، قَالَ مَرِضَ فَأَحْسَنْتُ الْقِيَامَ عَلَيْهِ، فَوَلِيتُ دَفْنَهُ، قَالَ: قَدْ كَانَ أَهْلَ ذَاكَ مِنْكَ. فَمَكُثَ حِينًا. ثُمَّ إِنَّ الرَّجُلَ الَّذِي أَوْصَى إِلَيْهِ أَنْ يُبْلِغَ عَنْهُ وَافَى الْمَوْسِمَ، فَقَالَ: يَا آلَ قُرَيْشٍ، قَالُوا: هَذِهِ قُرَيْشٌ، قَالَ: يَا آلَ بَنِي هَاشِمٍ، قَالُوا: هَذِهِ بَنُوْ هَاشِمٍ، قَالَ: أَيْنَ أَبُو طَالِبٍ؟ قَالُوْا: هَذَا أَبُوْا طَالِبٍ، قَالَ: أَمَرَنِي فُلانٌ أَنْ أُبْلِغَكَ رِسَالَةً، أَنَّ فُلانًا قَتَلَهُ فِي عِقَالٍ، فَأَتَاهُ أَبُوْا طَالِبٍ فَقَالَ لَهُ: اخْتَرْمِنَّا إِحْدَى ثَلاثٍ، إِنْ شِئْتَ أَنْ تُؤَدِّيَ مِائَةً مِنَ الإِبِلِ، فَإِنَّكَ قَتَلْتَ صَاحِبَنَا، وَإِنْ شِئْتَ حَلَفَ خَمْسُوْنَ مِنْ قَوْمِكَ: إِنَّكَ لَمْ تَقْتُلْهُ، فَإِنْ أَبَيْتَ قَتَلْنَاكَ بِهِ، فَأَتَى قَوْمَهُ، فَقَالُوْا: نَحْلِفُ.

فَأَتَتْهُ امْرَأَةٌ مِنْ بَنِي هَاشِمٍ كَانَتْ تَحْتَ رَجُلٍ مِنْهُمْ قَدْ وَلَدَتْ لَهُ، فَقَالَتْ: يَا أَبَا طَالِبٍ، أُحِبُّ أَنْ تُجِيزَ ابْنِي هَذَا بِرَجُلٍ مِنَ الْخَمْسِيْنَ، وَلا تُصْبِرْ يَمِيْنَهُ حَيْثُ تُصْبَرُ الأَيْمَانُ، فَفَعَلَ. فَأَتَاهُ رَجُلٌ مِنْهُمْ فَقَالَ: يَا أَبَا طَالِبٍ، أَرَدْتَ خَمْسِيْنَ رَجُلاً أَنْ يَّحْلِفُوْا مَكَانَ مِائَةٍ مِّنَ الإِبِلِ، يُصِيْبُ كُلَّ رَجُلٍ بَعِيْرَانِ هَذَانِ بَعِيْرَانِ، فَاقْبَلْهُمَا مِنِّي وَلا تُصْبِرْ يَمِيْنِي حَيْثُ تُصْبَرُ الأَيْمَانُ، فَقَبِلَهُمَا.

وَجَاءَ ثَمَانِيَةٌ وَأَرْبَعُوْنَ، فَحَلَفُوْا.

قَالَ ابْنُ عَبَّاسٍ: فَوَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ، مَا حَالَ الْحَوْلُ وَمِنَ الثَّمَانِيَةِ وَأَرْبَعِيْنَ عَيْنٌ تَطْرِفُ.

Translation

[Sayyidina Ibn Abbas رضى الله عنه said: The first event of Al-Qasamah[1] in the pre-Islamic period of Ignorance was practised by us (Bani Hashim). A man from Bani Hashim was employed by a Qurayshi man from another branch family. The

[1] Law of equality in punishment.

labourer set out with the Qurayshi, driving his camels. There passed by him another man from Bani Hashim. The leather rope of the latter's bag was broken so he said to the labourer, "Will you help me by giving me a rope in order to tie the handle of my bag, lest the camels should run away from me?" The labourer gave him a rope and the latter tied his bag with it. When the caravan halted, all the camels' legs were tied with their fetters except one camel's. The employer asked the labourer, "Why has this camel of all the camels not been fettered?" He said, "There is no fetter for it." The Qurayshi asked, "Where is its fetter?" The labourer told him what had happened so the Qurayshi beat the labourer with a stick that caused his death. (Just before he died) a man from Yemen passed by him. The labourer asked him, "Will you go for the pilgrimage?" He replied, "I do not think I will perform it, but perhaps I will perform it." The labourer said, "Will you convey a message for me in your life?" The other man said, "Yes." The labourer wrote, "When you go for the pilgrimage, call the family of the Quraysh and if they respond to you, call the family of the Bani Hashim and if they respond to you, ask for Abu Talib and tell him that so-and-so has killed me for a fetter." After that the labourer died.

When the employer reached (Makkah), Abu Talib visited him and asked, "What has happened to our companion?" He said, "He became ill and I looked after him nicely but he died and I buried him." Abu Talib said, "The deceased deserved that from you."

After some time, the man whom the labourer had asked to convey the message reached Makkah during the pilgrimage season. He called out, "O family of Quraysh!" They replied, "Here we are!" Then he called out, "O Bani Hashim!" And they replied, "Here wer are!" He asked "Who is Abu Talib?" The people pointing out to him, said, "He is Abu Talib." He said, "So-and-so has asked me to convey a message to you that so-and-so had killed him for a fetter (of a camel)."

Then Abu Talib went to the Qurayshi killer and placed before him three alternatives asking him to choose one of them:

i) If you wish, give us one hundred camels because you have murdered our companion.

ii) If you wish, fifty of your men should take an oath that you have not committed the murder of our companion.

iii) If you do not accept this then we kill you in *Qisas*.(1)

The killer went to his people and they said, "We will take an oath."

Then a woman from Bani Hashim who was married to one of them (the Quraysh), and had given birth to a child from him, came to Abu Talib and said, "O Abu Talib! I wish that my son, from among the fifty men, should be excused from this oath, and he should not take the oath when the oath-taking is carried on." Abu Talib excused him. Then another man from them came and said, "O Abu Talib! You have asked for fifty persons to take an oath or a hundred camels to be given (to you) and that means each man has to give two camels (or take the oath). So, here are the two camels I wish you to accept from me and excuse me from taking an oath when oaths are taken." Abu Talib accepted them from him. Then forty-eight men came and took the oath (that the Quraysh had not killed the labourer).

Ibn Abbas رضى الله عنه said, "By Him in Whose Hand my soul is, before the end of that year, none of those forty-eight men remained alive.] (Bukhari *Hadith* # 3846, Nasai)

Explanation

Murder is a grave sin and the worst of its kind. The Qur'an has frequently told us that it is the worst of wrongs. In fact, on one occasion its punishment has been mentioned and its severity emphasised:

وَمَنْ يَّقْتُلْ مُؤْمِنًا مُّتَعَمِّدًا فَجَزَآؤُهُ جَهَنَّمُ خَالِدًا فِيْهَا وَغَضِبَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَلَعَنَهُ وَاَعَدَّ لَهُ عَذَابًا عَظِيْمًا

{And whosoever slays a believer wilfully, his recompense is Hell, abiding therein; and Allah shall be wroth with him and shall curse him, and He has prepared for him a mighty chastisement.} (An-Nisa', 4:93)

Again we are told:

مَنْ قَتَلَ نَفْسًا بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ أَوْ فَسَادٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَتَلَ النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا

{Whosoever slays a human being for other than manslaughter, or for (spreading) corruption in the land, it shall be as if he had slain all mankind.} (Al-Ma'idah, 5:32)

Obviously, killing anyone, particularly a Muslim is the worst of sins and is like killing all mankind. The *Shari'ah* of Islam has prescribed severe punishment for it so that it may not be committed for it is very repulsive and dangerous.

The punishment for wilful murder is *qisas* (retaliation) or, if the heirs agree to a remission, or if the murder was committed unintentionally, then there is a heavy penalty. This is a worldly punishment, and in the Hereafter there is a severe punishment in store. Hence, if anyone has in him even the slightest fear of Allah and thought of the Hereafter then he will refrain from committing this crime.

Then, it also happens that a murderer is untraced or unknown. The *Shari'ah* has suggested a method to trace the murderer as far as possible. It is the method of *Al-Qasamah* which is referred to in the narrative. It may be defined briefly thus; if someone is found murdered and the murderer cannot be known then fifty of the respected men of the area where the body is found should state on oath that they are not involved in the murder and they do not know about the murder. Fifty people is a big number and normally so many people do not agree to speak lies together.

In this case, however, the murderer was known but there was no evidence against him. So, Abu Talib went to him and offered him that he may choose one of three things. He could surrender a hundred camels as penalty (bloodnit) against killing the man. Or, fifty of his tribe could affirm on oath that he had not killed their man. But, if he did not agree to both choices then it meant that he was the murderer and the third way was that they would kill him in retaliation.

The Qurayshi man consulted his tribe and they agreed to take a false oath to prevent suffering the disgrace of being accused of murder, and to maintain their reputation. However, a woman of the Bani Hashim, who had married a man of the Quraysh of the murderer's tribe, approached Abu Talib and requested him to excuse

her son from taking the oath. She did not wish her son to take a false oath. She knew that anyone who takes a false oath may suffer punishment in this life as well as the next.

Those people had a specified place where oaths were taken. It was in *BaytAllah* between the *Maqam Ibrahim* (station of Ibrahim) and *Hajr Al-Aswad* (the Black Stone). The woman requested him to excuse her son at that place when the oath-taking began.

Similarly, another person also approached Abu Talib and pointed to him that the choices given by him included handing over of a hundred camels or oath-taking by fifty men which meant that a man could give away two camels and excuse himself from oath-taking. So, he wished to be excused against two camels which he had brought. The remaining forty-eight men took a false oath each of them.

Sayyidina Ibn Abbas رضی اللہ عنہ said, "By Him, Who holds my life! None of the forty-eight men survived the year passing the oath-taking." This was the consequence of taking a false oath.

Lessons and Messages

1. This method of *Al-Qasamah* was practised in the Days of Ignorance. The Islamic *Shari'ah* retained it on the same method. This shows that not all the practices of the *Jahiliyah* (Days of Ignorance) were wrong. In fact, Islam retained some of them in its *Shari'ah*.

2. The consequences of taking a false oath on Allah are serious and all the forty-eight men died within a year of taking false oath. They had concealed the truth and tried to protect a murderer.

3. The *Hadith* also discloses that there were God-fearing men in the Days of Ignorance too who realised that they would have to answer for their deeds. The narrative tells us of a woman and a man among the fifty who feared the repercussions of false oath.

4. It was a good custom of the Days of Ignorance and worth adopting that man could rely on a stranger with his secrets. Strangers who promised to do something kept their promise. We have seen how the dying man confided in the stranger and relied on him to convey his message, and he did truly convey it.

The Forty-ninth Story

The Stubborn Bani Isra'il

First Words

It is the work of the ill-disposed people that they ridicule the commands of their Benefactor. The Bani Isra'il are a people who were blessed with extraordinary favours from Allah. In spite of their persistent disobedience, unfaithfulness, rebellion against Divine injunctions and two-faced treatment of the Prophets عليهم السلام, they were favoured with innumerable blessings and bounties. Those people whose disposition it is to be unfaithful and ill-natured cannot be expected to care for the commands of Allah. The following narration gives us an idea of their foolish, ill-natured stubbornness.

روى البخارى عن أبي هريرة قال: قال رسول الله ﷺ: قيل لبني إسرائيل ادْخُلُوْا الْبَابَ سُجَّدًا وَّقُوْلُوْا حِطَّةٌ (البقره: ٥٨) فَبَدَّلُوْا، فَدَخَلُوْا يَزْحَفُوْنَ عَلَى اِسْتَاهِهِمْ وَقَالُوْا حَبَّةٌ فِيْ شَعْرَةٍ.

Translation

[Imam Bukhari has transmitted in his Sahih that Sayyidina Abu Hurayrah رضى الله عنه said that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said: The Bani Isra'il were told, "Enter the gate (of the town) bowing with humility (prostrating yourselves) and saying: Repentance." But they changed the word and entered the town crawling on their buttocks, saying, "A grain in *Sha'rah* (a spike or a hair)."] (Bukhari # 3403. Muslim)

Explanation

The Bani Isra'il are a people who have distinguished themselves in history as the most disobedient and rebellious people. They have

surpassed everyone else in obstinacy, in making fun of the commands of Allah and His Messengers whom they tormented very much. They had become such hard-hearted that unless they were subjected to Divine punishment they did not turn to Allah. When they found themselves being punished they turned to Allah but as soon as the punishment was withdrawn they returned to their mischievious ways, and rebelled and disobeyed Allah, and devided His commands. This is the picture of a vast majority of them.

Once Allah ordered them that as they enter the gates of the city. *Mad'in Al-Ard*, they must enter it prostrating themselves and saying حطة (*Hittatun*) "Forgiveness" or "Repentance". They were assured that if they did that they would be forgiven their sins and granted more favours.

They could easily have followed the instructions but they were helpless before their own evil nature. When they encountered the gates, instead of prostrating themselves, they crawled inside on their buttocks in a clear mockery of the commands of Allah. And, instead of uttering the word they were asked to call out, they uttered another word similar to it in pronunciation but different in meaning حنطة في شعرة (A grain in a spike or hair). This behaviour is clearly the worst form of disobedience and a mockery of Allah's commands. They could have seized the opportunity to get pardon through the easy way suggested by Allah but they chose to again disobey and make fun of the order. Their foolish conduct entitled them to punishment.

The Qur'an has said:

فَبَدَّلَ الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا قَوْلاً غَيْرَ الَّذِىْ قِيْلَ لَهُمْ فَأَنْزَلْنَا عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا رِجْزًا مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَفْسُقُوْنَ۝

{But those who did evil substituted a saying other than that which had been said to them, so We sent down upon those who did evil a scourge from heaven because they used to transgress} (Al-Baqarah, 2:59)

Surely, the repercussions for disobedience and mockery of the commands of Allah are such. The evil people face a severe torment and so the Bani Isra'il were chastised for their insolence.

We must make it clear here that while a vast majority of the Bani Isra'il were disobedient and persisted in such behaviour, it does

not follow that they did not have obedient and virtuous people among them. In fact, there were righteous people among them and we have narrated events in the lives of some of them earlier in this book, events which indeed are inspiring and which motivate to piety. It was for the virtue and righteousness of these people that Allah had allowed respite to the Bani Isra'il as a whole. However, the pious people were very few in number, a very small minority.

Lessons and Messages

1. The first lesson we learn is that it is a great crime to change the commands of Allah and anyone who does that calls upon himself the punishment of Allah.

In the present era, too, some people suggest changes in the clear and unambiguous commands of the Qur'an. they take the path of reading meanings in its interpretation which are not there to satisfy their personal ends. Such people must remember the fate of the Bani Isra'il.

Some of the examples of commands which some people hope to misinterpret are those concerning the veil (*hijab*), interest, bribery, wine and such others. An unsuccessful attempt is made to present the commands of the Qur'an and *Ahadith* out of context and in a distorted manner. Such people must learn a lesson from this narrative.

2. This narrative also teaches a lesson to Muslims that when they enter a town or city as victors, they must not enter haughtily as tyrants, but they must show humility and must lack all signs of arrogance as they enter it. They must thank Allah who granted them victory as they enter it. This attitude will fetch them blessings in the victory. The Bani Isra'il (the Jews) did not abide by it but, praise be to Allah, there are several examples, in Islamic history of Muslims who entered the cities conquered by them with humility and submission. Their tongues uttered praise of Allah and gratitude to Him. Their foreheads bowed down in prostration. The behaviour of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ is an example.

3. The *Hadith* also tells us that disobedience to Allah makes one liable to be punished in the Hereafter. Besides, it is also the cause of worldly blessings being taken away. Thus, disobedience is punished

both in this world and the next.

May Allah grant us perfect obedience to His commands. May He preserve all Muslims from mischief and trial of every kind. *Aameen*!

The Fiftieth Story

The Root of All Evil

First Words

A sin follows another and one who performs a sin agrees quickly to commit a graver sin. A bar where wine is served and which is called أم الخبائث (*umm al-Khaba'ith*), the mother of all impurities, pulls the most ascetic of men into trial and mischief. One who reconciles himself with wine does not hesitate to commit any known sin on earth. The *Shari'ah* has declared wine as impure although it may have certain advantages. It has declared as unlawful the earnings of anyone associated with it in any way, and his work as the worst crime. This worst of impurities dampens a man's intellect and takes him on the path of the devil.

Let us hear the blessed words of the most truthful man ﷺ in this regard–to learn lessons, to receive admonition:

فهل من مدّكر

{But is there anyone who would be admonished} (Al-Qamar, 54: 15, etc.)

١ . روى النسائى عَنْ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ الْحَارِثِ عَنْ أَبِيْهِ، قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ عُثْمَانَ رَضِيَ اللهُ عَنْهُ، يَقُوْلُ: اجْتَنِبُوْا الْخَمْرَ، فَإِنَّهَا أُمُّ الْخَبَائِثِ، إِنَّهُ كَانَ رَجُلٌ مِمَّنْ خَلا قَبْلَكُمْ تَعَبَّدَ، فَعَلِقَتْهُ امْرَأَةٌ غَوِيَّةٌ، فَأَرْسَلَتْ إِلَيْهِ جَارِيَتَهَا، فَقَالَتْ لَهُ إِنَّا نَدْعُوْكَ لِلشَّهَادَةِ، فَانْطَلَقَ مَعَ جَارِيَتِهَا، فَطَفِقَتْ كُلَّمَا دَخَلَ بَابًا أَغْلَقَتْهُ دُوْنَهُ، حَتَّى أَفْضَى إِلَى إِمْرَأَةٍ وَضِيئَةٍ عِنْدَهَا غُلامٌ وَبَاطِيَةُ خَمْرٍ، فَقَالَتْ: إِنِّي واللهِ مَا دَعَوْتُكَ لِلشَّهَادَةِ، وَلَكِنْ دَعَوْتُكَ لِتَقَعَ عَلَيَّ، أَوْ تَشْرَبَ مِنْ هَذِهِ الْخَمْرَةِ كَأْسًا، أَوْتَقْتُلَ هَذَا الْغُلامَ.

قَالَ فَاسْقِيْنِي مِنْ هَذَا الْخَمْرِ كَأْسًا، فَسَقَتْهُ كَأْسًا، قَالَ: زِيْدُوْنِي، فَلَمْ يَرِمْ حَتَّى وَقَعَ عَلَيْهَا، وَقَتَلَ النَّفْسَ، فَاجْتَنِبُوْا الْخَمْرَ، فَإِنَّهَا وَاللّٰهِ لا يَجْتَمِعُ الإِيْمَانُ وَإِدْمَانُ الْخَمْرِ إِلا لَيُوْشِكُ أَنْ يُخْرِجَ أَحَدُهُمَا صَاحِبَهُ.

٢. أَخْبَرَنَا سُوَيْدٌ، قَالَ: أَنْبَأَنَا عَبْدُ اللّٰهِ يَعْنِي ابْنَ الْمُبَارَكِ، عَنْ يُوْنُسَ، عَنِ الزُّهْرِيِّ ، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنِي أَبُوْ بَكْرِ ابْنُ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ الْحَارِثِ أَنَّ أَبَاهُ قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ عُثْمَانَ يَقُوْلُ: اجْتَنِبُوْا الْخَمْرَ، فَإِنَّهَا أُمُّ الْخَبَائِثِ، فَإِنَّهُ كَانَ رَجُلٌ مِمَّنْ خَلا قَبْلَكُمْ يَتَعَبَّدُ وَيَعْتَزِلُ النَّاسَ. فَذَكَرَمِثْلَهُ، قَالَ: فَاجْتَنِبُوْا الْخَمْرَ فَإِنَّهُ وَاللّٰهِ لا يَجْتَمِعُ وَالإِيْمَانُ أَبَدًا إِلا يُوْشِكُ أَحَدُهُمَا أَنْ يُخْرِجَ صَاحِبَهُ.

Translation

[1. It is transmitted by Nasa'i as narrated by Abdur Rahman bin Al-Harith from his father that he heard Sayyidina Uthman رضی اللہ عنہ say:

Keep away from wine for it is the root of every impurity and evil. Among the people preceding you there was a great worshipper and an ascetic. An immodest and immoral woman fell in love with him. She sent her maid slave to him and she said to him, "We invite you to witness an affair (or transaction)." (To give a true testimony is virtuous and pious people do not miss an opportunity to do a pious deed.) So, he accompanied the maid-slave. She was careful to shut every door behind them until they had entered several doors and faced a beautiful woman who had an infant child and a bottle of wine beside her.

She said to him, "By Allah, I have not invited you to give witness to anything. I have called you that you may commit adultery with me, or drink a glass of this wine, or kill this boy."

The ascetic said to her. "Give me wine to drink", (for he thought that it was the least harmful of the three wrong things). So, the immoral woman gave him wine to drink. (Barely he put it down his throat when he became intoxicated). He asked for

more (and he drank endless cups of it). It was not long before he committed adultery with the woman and also killed the boy.

So, keep away from wine. It is such a thing that by Allah, faith and continuous courses of wine cannot coexist in anyone, and one is sure to drive away the other. (Either faith will rescue the faithful from wine; or wine will remove faith).]

[2. Abdur Rahman bin Mubarak has related from Yunus from Az-Zuhri that Abu Bakr bin Abdur Rahman bin Al-Harith quoted his father as saying:

Sayyidina Uthman رضی اللہ عنہ said, "Keep away from wine for it is the mother of all impurities."]

[3. Tabarani has transmitted the *Hadith* of Abdullah bin Amr Al-Aas that once after the death of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, Sayyidina Abu Bakr, Umar bin Al-Khattab and other Companions رضی اللہ عنہم were sitting together. They discussed among themselves and wondered what would be the gravest of sins. They did not know for sure what it was, so they sent me to Abdullah bin Amr Al-Aas to ask him about it. He told me that to drink wine was the gravest of the major sins.

I came back to them and told them what he had said but they disagreed with him and all of them went to his house (for an explanation). He told them that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ had said:

One of the kings of the Bani Isra'il arrested someone and put before him certain choices (of which he was bound to choose one). He could (i) drink wine, (ii) kill an infant, (iii) commit adultery, or (iv) eat pork. But, if he rejected all of these then he must be prepared to be put to death. He (thought wine was the least harmful and) chose wine. Hence, when he drank wine, none of the other things were forbidden to him (in his eyes and he did them all).

The Prophet ﷺ said at this time, "Whoever drinks wine, his *Salat* are not accepted for forty nights (and days) and if he dies while there are traces of wine in his bladder then Paradise is forbidden to him but if he dies within forty days then he dies the death of the Days of Ignorance."] (Nasai, Tabarani)

Explanation

These *Ahadith* speak of a similar incident which reflect on the corruption in the Isra'ili societies. Perhaps the man who was compelled to do the unlawful and destructive acts was a well-known and influential man, one whom other people imitated in their lives. Perhaps the king feared that he might become more popular than him and more influential than him because of his piety and asceticism and he himself may become less popular. This has been a weakness among all monarchs and tyrants and they cannot stand anyone gaining public acclaim. They have always tried to suppress such people and to disgrace them.

So, the king used a high-class lady to further his evil designs. She was asked to corrupt the pious man and put him to trial. A trial through women is the most effective of all trials. Evil people have used this strategy in every era.

That woman was very rich and highly placed in society but she was an immodest woman. She did not feel repelled from doing a shameless act. She deceived the pious man by asking him to visit her to bear witness to a deed and she had sent her slave for the purpose. He knew that it was virtuous to stand witness between people so agreed to go with the maid-slave to the woman. When he entered the house, the slave-girl shut the doors behind him. When they had passed some doors in this manner he encountered she had before her a bottle of wine and an infant child. The woman divulged to him that there was no affair for him to witness but that he was called to commit adultery with her and if he did not then he may either kill the infant baby or drink wine. If he did not do any of those things then he must be prepared to die. The other version tells us that the woman also presented him the choice of eating swine flesh. That man was a worshipper, and an ascetic at that, but not a religious scholar or one who has enjoyed the company of religious scholars, so he did not show will-power and steadfast perseverence in religion. He did not place reliance on Allah Who would have definitely relieved him of the difficulty and afforded him a way out as He had done for Sayyidina Yusuf عليه السلام although the doors were locked behind him. Prophet Yusuf عليه السلام did not consider himself helpless but put his trust in Allah and was confident of receiving His

help. He prayed to Him to get him out of the trying situation and Allah got him out, the locked doors, opening as he advanced towards them. The pious worshipper in this narrative, however, did not have insight and he supposed that if he did not obey the woman then he would be murdered. He thought wine was the least sinful of all things and he opted for it. He was intoxicated and kept asking for more and he lost his senses and did not know what faith was and what fear of Allah was. He was unconcerned of the Hereafter and became shameless and immodest so he slept with the lady and also killed the infant.

It appears from the *Hadith* that their objective was to disgrace this pious man and bring his piety and worship to nothing. This is apparent from the choice placed before him and not compelling him to commit adultery. Each of the three or four choices before him was in opposition to belief and harmful to this man's nobility and virtue.

Anyway, the Prophet ﷺ had narrated this story to point out that wine is the worst of sins,.and the root of all evils. It intoxicates and causes a man to lose his senses. In a state of intoxication, he does things which are disgracing and harmful. The Qur'an has called it:

رِجْسٌ مِّنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ۝

{an abomination of Satan's handiwork} (Al-Ma'idah, 5:90)

The Prophet ﷺ mentioned that wine is unlawful and warned against falling into the evil. He said, "The *Salat* of an alcoholist are not accepted for forty nights and if he dies while there is even a drop of wine in his body then Paradise is forbidden to him. If he dies within the forty nights then he is said to have died a death of the Days of Ignorance."

Lessons and Messages

The *Hadith* provides us many lessons:

1. The *Hadith* tells us that it is a grave sin to be attached in anyway with wine or a bar where it is served. It also points out the evil and corrupt things that result from drinking wine and its bad influence on society. The sin of drinking wine leads to inumerable other sinful acts.

2. The *Hadith* also recalls that the men of Allah have to pass

through many trials. The wicked people try to divert Allah's pious slaves from the pious path to the wrong path of different methods.

3. Sometimes lack of religious knowledge causes a worshipper to be misled. A worship cannot be discharged as it should be if one does not have proper knowledge. It is just like knowledge which is not put into practice. A deed which is not backed by knowledge cannot grow religious comprehension in a man. If that pious man also had religious knowledge he would not have resigned himself into doing any one of the choices of sin offered to him but he would have faced difficulties firmly and would have been prepared to die if that was necessary to avoid being sinful–Death is certain and a man dies only once. Hence, he would have given away his life for the sake of religion and preserved himself from being misled. Nevertheless, it is not without the blessings of Allah that one may hope to come through scratchless.

4. This incident teaches us that every righteous Muslim must constantly pray to Allah to preserve him from being misled and to offer him safety. He must keep away from misleading practices and misled people. He must also be careful of devilish human beings and jinns.

5. The forces of piety and evil have been always antagonistic. The evil forces appear to exceed those of piety. Pious people have been fewer than the wicked. Reliability of pious and wicked forces however, does not depend on numbers but on the will of Allah, the Great. Whatever has been defined as evil by Allah continues to be evil even if all the people choose to do that and regard that as a good thing. Similarly, piety is defined by Allah as good and approved. All the people may give it their own definition but it will continue to be as Allah has defined it.

The pious people are taught in this story that they must remain determined and ambitious rejecting the influences of evil surroundings. They must not be overawed by evil forces. They must under all circumstances continue to practice piety and shun evil and prevent it with all in their power, so that the evil forces are subdued and overawed by them. They must not be dictated by circumstances but they must dictate to the circumstances.

The Fifty-first Story

Demonstration of Jibril's عليه السّلام Displeasure at Fir'awn

First Words

This brief story tells us how much Jibril عليه السّلام hated Fir'awn the rebel against Allah. He did not even like that Fir'awn should turn a Believer and receive the mercy of Allah.

١. روى الترمذى في سننه عن ابن عباسؓ أنَّ النبي ﷺ قال: لَمَّا أَغْرَقَ اللّٰهُ فِرْعَوْنَ قَالَ: آمَنْتُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا الَّذِىْ آمَنَتْ بِهٖ بَنُوْ إِسْرَائِيْلَ (يونس: ٩٠) فَقَالَ جِبْرِيْلُ: يَا مُحَمَّدُ! فَلَوْ رَأَيْتَنِىْ وَأَنَا آخُذُ مِنْ حَالِ الْبَحْرِ فَأَدُسُّهُ فِيْ فِيْهِ مَخَافَةَ أَنْ تُدْرِكَهُ الرَّحْمَةُ. قال ابو عيسى هذا حديثٌ حسن.

٢. وفي روايةٍ أن النبي ﷺ ذكر أنَّ جِبْرِيْلَ عَلَيْهِ السَّلام جَعَلَ يَدُسُّ فِيْ فِيْ فِرْعَوْنَ الطِّيْنَ خَشْيَةَ أَنْ يَّقُوْلَ: لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا اللّٰهُ فَرْحَمَهُ اللّٰهُ أَوْ خَشْيَةَ أَنْ يَّرْحَمَهُ اللّٰهُ.

قال ابو عيسى الترمذى: هذا حديثٌ حسنٌ صحيحٌ غريبٌ من هذا الوجه.

Translation

[**1.** Sayyidina Ibn Abbas رضى الله عنه has said that the Prophet ﷺ said: When Allah drowned Fir'awn, he said (while drowning) آمنتُ أنّهُ لا إله إلا الذى آمنت به بنو إسرائيل "I believe that there is no God but He in Whom the Children of Isra'il believe",[1] Jibril said to me, "O Muhammad! If you could have seen me when I took the mud from the sea and shoved it into his mouth, fearing

[1] Yunus, 10: 90.

that the mercy of Allah might save him."]

[2. The other version quotes the Prophet ﷺ as saying: Jibril عليه السلام began to put wet mud in the mouth of Fir'awn lest he confess that there is no God but Allah and Allah shower His mercy on him.] (Tirmizi)

Explanation

The Qur'an has mentioned in detail the story of Fir'awn and his disobedience and the moral derived from it. Allah has stated in *surah Yunus* that when he was drowning and saw death before him he exclaimed:

آمَنْتُ أَنَّهُ لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا الَّذِيْ آمَنَتْ بِهِ بَنُوْا إِسْرَائِيْلَ وَأَنَا مِنَ الْمُسْلِمِيْنَ ٥

{I believe that there is no God but He in Whom the Bani Isra'il believe and I am of the Muslims.} (Yunus, 10: 90)

Allah reminded him that while he displayed obedience then, he had been spreading mischief before that. And, he had to meet the consequences of his conduct.

Fir'awn was among the few top arrogant and rebellious people of the world. He had spread corruption all over the land and he claimed to be divine. In other words he opposed Allah. when the opportunity given to him was over, the rope was pulled suddenly.

Side by side with those who love Allah and His pious slaves, the angels too despise the enemies of Allah and those who rebel against Him.

The *Hadith* of this essay mentions the demonstration of the hatred of Jibril عليه السلام for Fir'awn. Jibril عليه السلام was the chief of the angels and the closest of them to Allah.

He himself said to the Prophet ﷺ that he was prepared to fill the mouth of Fir'awn with mud lest he recite the *kalimah* of faith, of the unity of Allah and become worthy of the mercy of Allah, Lord of the worlds, Who is the Most Merciful of those who show mercy. That would have saved him from the punishment due to him.

The question does arise that if Allah had forgiven Fir'awn, how would it have been harmful to Jibril عليه السلام?

The answer to this question is that Jibril's عليه السلام immense hatred was against the tyrants, rebels and disobedient people and his attitude was not against Allah's decision whatever it be. The angels,

all of them, could never be against Allah's decision and Jibril عليه السّلام was the chief of the angels who too could not be expected to disagree in the matter. Everyone who believes in Allah and loves justice cannot wish that mercy should be shown to the tyrants, rebels like Fir'awn, and enemies of Allah. All believers must show hatred for the enemies of Allah.

Lessons and Messages

1. We can guage the great Mercy of Allah from the fear expressed by Jibril عليه السّلام that Allah might shower His Mercy on Fir'awn, the extreme rebel.

2. The great merit of the *kalimah* of unity is clear from the fact that if the unbeliever of the type of Fir'awn could have professed it before he was going through the pangs of death, he would have been entitled to the mercy of Allah.

3. The *Hadith* makes it clear that Jibril عليه السّلام despised the enemies of Allah and rebel against His commands are subject of the anger of Allah.

4. We also know that the punishment of Allah is brought down by Jibril عليه السّلام. All the people who were punished in the past received the punishment through Jibril عليه السّلام.

The Fifty-second Story

The Woman with Wooden Sandals

First Words

It has been with human beings as their instinctive urge that they make themselves prominent. This urge is more marked with women and they make themselves up and adorn themselves to attract others to them. This is the story of a woman who used a novel way to show herself tall in the eyes of other people.

١. روى مسلم في صحيحه عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيْدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ قَالَ: كَانَتِ امْرَأَةٌ مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيْلَ قَصِيْرَةٌ، تَمْشِي مَعَ امْرَأَتَيْنِ طَوِيْلَتَيْنِ، فَاتَّخَذَتْ رِجْلَيْنِ مِنْ خَشَبٍ، وَخَاتَمًا مِنْ ذَهَبٍ مُغْلَقٌ مُطْبَقٌ، ثُمَّ حَشَتْهُ مِسْكًا، وَهُوَ أَطْيَبُ الطِّيبِ، فَمَرَّتْ بَيْنَ الْمَرْأَتَيْنِ فَلَمْ يَعْرِفُوْهَا، فَقَالَتْ بِيَدِهَا هَكَذَا وَنَفَضَ شُعْبَةُ يَدَهُ.

٢. وفي رواية أحمد: فَكَانَتْ إِذَا مَرَّتْ بِالْمَجْلِسِ حَرَّكَتْهُ، فَنَفَخَ رِيْحُهُ.

٣. ورواه ابن خذيمة في التوحيد عن أبي سعيد أو جابر أن النبي ﷺ خطب خطبة فأطالها، وذكر فيها أمر الدنيا والآخرة، فذكر إِنَّ أَوَّلَ مَا هَلَكَ بَنُوْ إِسْرَائِيْلَ أَنَّ امْرَأَةَ الْفَقِيْرِ كَانَتْ تُكَلِّفُهُ مِنَ الثِّيَابِ أَوْ الصِّيَغِ أَوْ قَالَ: مِن الصِّيْغَةِ مَا تُكَلِّفُ امْرَأَةَ الغني، فَذَكَرَ امْرَأَةً مِنْ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيْلَ كَانَتْ قَصِيْرَةً واتَّخَذَتْ رِجْلَيْنِ مِنْ خِشبَ، وَخَاتَمًا لَهُ غَلْقٌ وَطَبَقٌ، وَحَشَتْهُ مسكًا،

وَخَرَجَتْ بَيْنَ امْرَأَتَيْنِ طَوِيْلَتَيْنِ، أَوْ جَسِيمَتَيْنِ، فَبَعَثُوا إِنْسَانًا يَّتْبَعُهُمْ، فَعَرَفَ الطَوِيْلَتَيْنِ، وَلَمْ يَعْرِفْ صَاحِبَةَ الرِّجْلَيْنِ مِنْ خَشَبٍ.

Translation

[**1.** Sayyidina Abu Sa'eed Al-Khudri رضی الله عنه reported that the Prophet ﷺ said: There was a woman from Bani Isra'il who was short-statured and she walked in the company of two tall women with wooden sandals in her feet and a ring of gold made of plates with musk filled in them, and then locked up, and musk is the best of scents. Then she walked between two women. The people did not recognise her and she made a gesture with her hand like this (and Shu'ba shook his hand in order to give an indication how she shook her hand).]

[**2.** Ahmad's version says: When she passed by a people, she moved her ring whereby the fragrance spread wide.]

[**3.** Ibn Khazimah has transmitted that Abu Sa'eed Al-Khudri رضی الله عنه or Jabir رضی الله عنه has said that the Prophet ﷺ delivered a lengthy sermon one day covering the affairs of the world and the Hereafter. He also said: Surely the first thing that destroyed the Bani Isra'il was the affair of the poor and needy women who were very particular about clothes and colours. They wore such colourful clothes which only the wealthy women could afford.

He then mentioned one woman of the Bani Isra'il who was short-statured. She got for herself with wooden sandals (to conceal her short stature) and had made for herself a ring with an opening which was locked from the top. She filled it with musk. She then walked with tall or fat women. The people sent a man behind them and he recognised the tall women but not the one with wooden sandals.] (Muslim *Hadith* # 5598, Ahmad, Ibn Khazimah)

Explanation

The Holy Prophet ﷺ in his sermon, cautioned his Companions رضی الله عنهم of the affairs of the world and its colourful life, and encouraged them to think of the Hereafter. He advised them to refrain from doing what the Bani Isra'il did and destroyed

themselves. He traced for them the roots and beginings of destruction of the Bani Isra'il.

The beginnings of their destruction lay in their wealthy people adopting a highly ambitious life in matters of dress, personal adornment and eating and drinking. They spent lavishly on these things.

The poor people were impressed by the standard of the rich, and their wives vied with them and tried to do as the rich women did. This burdened the poor men considerably.

We see the same thing in our societies today. In trying to imitate the rich, the poor people are weakening themselves considerably and putting themselves in heavy debts, adding to their worries. Man is occupied in a pretentious life, setting for himself false standards and although he has amassed many means of comfort, he is not content or happy.

The example in the narration is one of these. The short-statured woman, consious of her short height tried to make herself conspicuous by wearing special wooden sandals which added to her height, and using musk to spread fragrance around herself. She used a golden ring prominently in which she filled musk and jerked it now and then to let out the smell. People did recognise the women with her but failed to recognise her.

The Prophet ﷺ pointed out by narrating this story that one must not live in a showy manner and not adopt airs and artificial ways of living. These things make him forget the purpose of his life and cause him to neglect good and righteous deeds. Islam advocates a simple livikng and a clear thinking.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ has cursed women who live and adopt a fashionable life. These include women who make use of false hair to lengthen them, thin, their eyebrows, tatoo themselves, apply fragrance and move in public, wear tight- fitting and thin dress, move about with strangers (non-mahram men). These women have been cursed by Allah and His Messenger. They are nude in the sight of Allah.

Islam commands women to use the veil, adopt a simple life, and disdains false standards of living. The aim of a Muslim is not to gain prominence in worldly life but to prepare himself for the Hereafter

and seek the pleasure of Allah and this cannot be had in false customs.

Lessons and Messages

1. The delivering of the sermon by the Prophet ﷺ is evidence that an orator may present examples through such life stories to get the attention of his listeners who may learn from them.

2. Women have always chosen to exhibit themselves. Whether she is a woman of the ancient times or the present era, she has preferred to use adornment, jewellery, beautiful dress and adopt fashion. However, it is a means of earning Alalh's anger.

3. Women have always tried to lure men to themselves, and vagabonds have tried to pay them exceptional attention. The woman in the story made herself conspicuous and the men sent one of them behind the women to identify them.

4. Man in every age has tried to gain skills in industry. The *Hadith* tells of the woman using special wooden sandals to gain height. Obviously, the maker of those sandals must have been a skilled person.

5. The *Hadith* tells us that musk is the most fragrant of all scents and the purest.

The Fifty-third Story

The Wicked Agent of the Aad

First Words

When a people are destined to destruction, Allah hands over their leadership to those who lead them to that. They consider something as a source of mercy but it brings them torment. The following *Hadith* tells us of a man whom the tribe of Aad had sent forward as their rescuer but he turned out to be one who brought them punishment.

روى الإمام أحمد في مسنده: عَنِ الْحارِثِ ابْنِ يَزِيْدَ الْبَكْرِيِّ قَالَ: خَرَجْتُ أَشْكُو الْعَلاءَ بْنَ الْحَضْرَمِيِّ إِلَى رَسُولِ اللّٰه ﷺ، فَمَرَرْتُ بالرَّبَذَةِ، فَإِذَا عَجُوْزٌ مِنْ بَنِي تَمِيْمٍ مُنْقَطِعٌ بِهَا، فَقَالَتْ لِي: يَا عَبْدَ اللّٰه، إِنَّ لِي إِلَى رَسُوْلِ اللّٰه ﷺ حَاجَةً، فَهَلْ أَنْتَ مُبَلِّغِي إِلَيْهِ؟ قَالَ: فَحَمَلْتُهَا، فَأَتَيْتُ الْمَدِيْنَةَ، فَإِذَا الْمَسْجِدُ غَاصٌّ بِأَهْلِهِ، وَإِذَا رَايَةٌ سَوْدَاءُ تَخْفِقُ، وَبلالٌ مُتَقَلِّدٌ السَّيْفَ بَيْنَ يَدَيْ رَسُوْلِ اللّٰه ﷺ، فَقُلْتُ: مَا شَأْنُ النَّاسِ؟ قَالُوْا يُرِيْدُ أَنْ يَبْعَثَ عَمْرَو بْنَ الْعَاصِ وَجْهًا.

قَالَ: فَجَلَسْتُ، قَالَ فَدَخَلَ مَنْزِلَهُ أَوْ قَالَ رَحْلَهُ، فَاسْتَأْذَنْتُ عَلَيْهِ، فَأَذِنَ لِي، فَدَخَلْتُ فَسَلَّمْتُ، فَقَالَ: هَلْ كَانَ بَيْنَكُمْ وَبَيْنَ بَنِي تَمِيْمٍ شَيْءٌ. قَالَ: فَقُلْتُ: نَعَمْ، قَالَ وَكَانَتْ لَنَا الدَّبْرَةُ عَلَيْهِمْ، وَمَرَرْتُ بِعَجُوزٍ مِنْ بَنِي تَمِيْمٍ مُنْقَطِعٌ بِهَا فَسَأَلَتْنِي أَنْ أَحْمِلَهَا إِلَيْكَ، وَهَا هِيَ بِالْبَابِ، فَأَذِنَ لَهَا، فَدَخَلَتْ.

فَقُلْتُ: يَا رَسُوْلَ اللّٰه، إِنَّ رَأَيْتَ أَنْ تَجْعَلَ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ بَنِي تَمِيْمٍ حَاجِزًا

فَاجْعَلِ الدَّهْنَاءَ، فَحَمِيَتِ الْعَجُوْزُ وَاسْتَوْفَزَتْ، قَالَتْ: يَا رَسُوْلَ اللّٰه، فَإِلَى أَيْنَ تَضْطَرُّ مُضَرَكَ؟ قَالَ: قُلْتُ إِنَّمَا مَثَلِي مَا قَالَ الأَوَّلُ مِعْزَاءُ حَمَلَتْ حَتْفَهَا، حَمَلْتُ هَذِهِ، وَلا أَشْعُرُ أَنَّهَا كَانَتْ لِي خَصْمًا، أَعُوْذُ بِاللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهِ أَنْ أَكُوْنَ كَوَافِدِ عَادٍ، قَالَ: (هِيهْ، وَمَا وَافِدُ عَادٍ؟) وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْحَدِيْثِ مِنْهُ، وَلَكِنْ يَسْتَطْعِمُهُ.

قُلْتُ إِنَّ عَادًا قَحَطُوْا، فَبَعَثُوْا وَافِدًا لَهُمْ يُقَالُ لَهُ: قَيْلٌ، فَمَرَّ بِمُعَاوِيَةَ بْنِ بَكْرٍ، فَأَقَامَ عِنْدَهُ شَهْرًا يَسْقِيْهِ الْخَمْرَ، وَتُغَنِّيْهِ جَارِيَتَان، يُقَالُ لَهُمَا الْجَرَادَتَان، فَلَمَّا مَضَى الشَّهْرُ خَرَجَ جِبَالَ تِهَامَةَ، فَنَادَى، اللَّهُمَّ إِنَّكَ تَعْلَمُ أَنِّي لَمْ أَجِئْ إِلَى مَرِيْضٍ فَأُدَاوِيَهُ، وَلا إِلَى أَسِيْرٍ فَأُفَادِيَهُ، اللَّهُمَّ اسْقِ عَادًا مَا كُنْتَ تَسْقِيْهِ.

فَمَرَّتْ بِهِ سَحَابَاتٌ سُوْدٌ، فَنُوْدِيَ مِنْهَا اخْتَرْ، فَأَوْمَأَ إِلَى سَحَابَةٍ مِنْهَا سَوْدَاءَ، فَنُوْدِيَ مِنْهَا، خُذْهَا رَمَادًا، رِمْدِدًا لا تُبْقِي مِنْ عَادٍ أَحَدًا. قَالَ فَمَا بَلَغَنِي أَنَّهُ بُعِثَ عَلَيْهِمْ مِنَ الرِّيْحِ إِلا قَدْرَ مَا يَجْرِي فِي خَاتِمِي هَذَا، حَتَّى هَلَكُوْا.

قَالَ أَبُوْا وَائِلٍ: وَصَدَقَ، قَالَ فَكَانَتِ الْمَرْأَةُ وَالرَّجُلُ إِذَا بَعَثُوْا وَافِدًا لَهُمْ، قَالُوْا لا تَكُنْ كَوَافِدِ عَادٍ.

Translation

[Harith bin Yazid Al-Bakriy رضى الله عنه said that he set forth towards the Messenger of Allah ﷺ with complaints against (the governor of Yemen Al-Ata bin Al-Hadri رضى الله عنه). He passed through Rabzah (near Madinah). There, he met an old woman of Bani Tameem who (was separated from her caravan and) was all alone. She asked him, "Slave of Allah! I have to meet the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, will you take me to him?" He picked her up and brought her to Madinah.

He found that the Masjid Nabawi was crowded by people and there was scant space inside. A black banner was lofted and Bilal had a sword in hand as he stood before the Prophet ﷺ. He

enquired what was happening and was told that Amr bin Al-Aas was being sent to wage *jihad* somewhere.

He sat down for sometime. Soon, the Prophet ﷺ entered his house. and he sought permission to meet him. He got the permission and he went in and saluted the Prophet ﷺ who asked him, "Is there tension between you and Bani Tameem?" Harith confirmed that it ws so, "But we have an upperhand over them. And, I chancd to meet an old woman of Bani Tameem who was all alone and had no one to pick her up. She requested me to bring her to you (so I have done that). She is sitting at the door." The Prophet ﷺ gave her his permission and she came in. Harith said to the Prophet ﷺ, "Messenger of Allah! If you would place a barrier between us and the Bani Tameem and make it (the desert) Ad-dahna."

The old woman turned pale on that and became restless. She said, "O Messenger of Allah! Where would the (tribe) Mudar go after that?"

Harith commented on himself, "I am as the earlier people had said: the sheep carried her own death on her back!" (It meant that a man believes he is doing something good but that actually causes him harm.) "I brought this old woman here on my shoulders and I did not even realise that she is my rival. I seek refuge in Allah and His Messenger that I should be like the representative of the tribe of Aad."

The Prophet ﷺ asked, "And what is the story of that man of Aad?" In fact, he knew that story better but he wished to enjoy hearing it from him.

Harith said: Once the tribe of Aad were struck by famine. They sent one of them as their representative by the name of Qayil (to go to Makkah and pray for them). On the way, he passed by Mu'awiyah bin Bakr and stopped there for a month. He drank wine and two female singer, called *Jaradatan*, sang before him. After a month, he went towards the mountain Jihamah and called out. "O Allah! You know that I have not come to a sick person whom I may treat, nor have I come to a prisoner whom I may ransom. O Allah! Just as You have been bestowing water to the Aad, do go on bestowing it on them!"

Then, some dark (rain-bearing) clouds passed over head and a voice called out to him, "Choose a cloud from these!" (so that it may rain on Aad. He pointed to one of them.) A voice called out from that cloud, "Hold him! Burner to ashes, turn him to ashes and leave no one from the Aad!"

He said, "I have not been told but that they were sent a violent wind even to the extent of this ring and all of them there were destroyed."

Abu Wa'il said, "He spoke the truth." Hence, whenever a man or a woman was sent to them, they used to say, "Do not be like the representative of Aad." (He had been instrumental in bringing upon them punishment).](Ahmad, Tirmizi.)

Explanation

This event concerns the Companion, Sayyidina Harith bin Yazid al-Bakriy رضی الله عنه. It is also stated that he was Harith bin Hasan رضی الله عنه whom his tribe Rabi'ah had sent to the Messenger of Allah ﷺ as their representative to complain against Sayyidina Ata bin Al-Hadri رضی الله عنه (governor of Yemen). On the way, he met a lonely old woman at Rabzah who pleaded with him to take her on his beast to the Prophet ﷺ. He took her to Madinah out of compassion for her. At Madinah, he saw a large number of people in the Masjid Nabawi which was jam-packed. People were being sent to wage *jihad* and Bilal رضی الله عنه was standing before the Prophet ﷺ alert with a drawn sword. Amr bin Al-Aas رضی الله عنه was leading the warriors.

Harith رضی الله عنه met the Messenger of Allah ﷺ and saluted him. The Prophet asked him about the confrontation between his tribe and the Tameem and he confirmed that they, the Rabi'ah enjoyed an upperhand.

Harith then told the Messenger of Allah ﷺ about the old woman whom he had brought with him from Rabzah. She was from the Bani Tameem. The Prophet ﷺ allowed her to come in and, meanwhile, Harith continued his conversation. He presented his people's demand that the Prophet ﷺ demarcate a barrier between them and Bani Tameem so that they may cease fighting. He suggested that the desert Ad-dahna be returned to them for it was in

their hands during the pre-Islamic period.

The old woman who belonged to Bani Tameem became restless on his demand and said angrily, "Then where will the tribe Mudar go?" (If Dahna was handed over to Rabi'ah where would the Mudar, who lived there, go?)

On hearing that Harith sensed that he had done injustice to his own people by doing a favour to the old woman. He compared himself to the saying of ancient people that *a sheep carries its own death*. "I carried this old woman without knowing that she was my rival." Then Harith sought the protection of Allah and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ lest his representing his people turn out to be like the representative of Aad.

In fact, he pointed to another example known to the Arabs who were wont to comment, when any of their representatives failed in his mission, that he was like the representative of Aad. His people had sent him that he might improve things for them but he messed them up!

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ asked him to explain what he meant and he related the story.

The tribe of 'Aad were an ancient tribe. Allah had sent to them Sayyidina Hud عليه السّلام as His Prophet and Messenger. However, they belied him and were punished by Allah for that. They faced draught and famine. So, they sent one of their noble men to Makkah so that he may pray to Allah at the *BaytAllah* to bless them with rain and mercy and their period of draught may end.

Perhaps, the Aad believed that they should behave with Allah as people do with a king that when they have to present a supplication they could send a representative on their behalf and get their demand approved. Instead of making a collective supplication, they chose to send an agent for all of them. It did not matter if the agent was worthless and impious. The religious scholars know that there is no point in appointing an agent to represent anyone before Allah. He accepts individual and collective supplications and pious deeds. His slaves must be humble before Him and reform themselves. They must seek His forgiveness and repent for their sins. He favours and blesses such slaves. It is not that a sining, immoral man should represent his nation before Allah, and he makes a rude supplication.

Such behaviour is likely to increase his troubles.

The respected representative was on his way to Tihamah the old name of the sacred land. He was on his way to seek favour for his troubled people. He encountered Mu'awiyah bin Bakr on his route, and he was his old friend. So, he stayed with him for a month forgetting the predicament of his people and enjoying himself at his friend's place. When he remembered his people, he resumed his journey and came to Tihamah where he prayed to the Lord of the worlds. What was his supplication?

"O Allah! You know that I have not visited a sick person that I may cure him. I have not come to prisoner whom I amy ransom. O Allah! Let the Aad have water as You have been ever giving them."

Look at the words. How very arrogant he seems! he is asking for something which none in the world can grant him, yet he is boastful and proud. His style is very ignorant. he did not praise and glorify Allah, or send benediction on the Prophet, showed no humility or respect. It seems that he was not making a supplication but he was showing a favour, he was asking for his right. Can such a supplication be granted? Or, is not the supplicant liable to be whipped? Allah does not like the arrogant and his proud nature.

His time was over. He had asked for rain and he was given rain. It can be a merciful rain or a painful one. He had not asked for a merciful rain. Clouds appeared on the sky above him and he was asked to choose one of them. He chose the darkest among the clouds and that was the end. It was called out, "O Chooser of ashes; O destroyer of everything! Take it!" The cloud burst eliminated the entire tribe of Aad!

Harith commented that the wind blew in every space equal to his ring where it could find itself an opening and destroyed everyone there.

اللّٰهُمَّ إِنَّا نَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْ عِقَابِكَ وَعَذَابِكَ وَسَخَطِكَ

"O Allah, we seek refuge with You from Your retribution, Your punishment and Your anger."

Since then this is being quoted by the Arabs as an example. And Harith also sought protection of Allah from being like the representative of Aad. His people had sent him to the Prophet ﷺ for their benefit and he prayed that he may not prove harmful for them.

Lessons and Messages

1. Sometimes people depute for themselves someone who is not deserving of the trust and he does not understand his responsibility. The result is that he becomes a headache for everyone. All the people have to face this man's mistake. It is like the suffering of the Aad for the mistake of their man. It teaches us that only a deserving, responsible man should be handed national representation.

2. It is proper and recommended to use the idioms, axims and examples of ancient people, unbelievers and all non-Muslims to draw lessons from them. Harith too had used such an example before the Prophet ﷺ. In fact, the *Shari'ah* teaches us:

كلمة الحكمة ضالة المؤمن

"The word of wisdom is the lost asset of the Believer (and he may use it wherever he finds it)." (Hadith)

3. It is human nature to listen to lesson-bearing stories of past people. The Qur'an also is replete with reference to such stories.

The Prophet's ﷺ desire to hear the background of the example of the agent of Aad demonstrates this aspect of human nature. A Muslim must listen to such examples to draw guidance and lessons from them.

4. It is not only a command of Islam but also a demand of human rights to help out and serve old and weak people. Harith رضی الله عنه brought the old woman on his beast with that very spirit. This is what Islam teaches us.

وآخر دعوانا ان الحمد لله رب العٰلمين

And our last call is that all praise belongs to Allah, Lord of the worlds.

PRAYER

May Allah cause this work to be a means of guidance for the writer, and an asset for him in the Hereafter. May He forgive the scribe and composer whatever mistakes they may have made.

I seek the protection of Allah from wrong thoughts and mistakes. May Allah make this book beneficial for everyone. And may He let it be an asset for all of us in the Hereafter.

وما توفيقي إلا بالله عليه توكلت وإليه أنيب

Servant of Religion and the Scholars.
MUHAMMAD ZAKARIYA IQBAL

May Allah also include the translator and publisher in these prayers through His mercy. May He overlook our faults and guide us and our families to the right path. *Aameen*!

Khalil Ashraf Usmani

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